

HUMAN DEVELOPMENT

Volume 29 : Number One : Spring 2008

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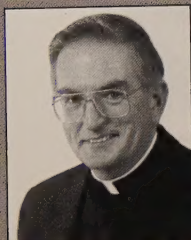
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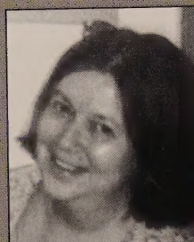
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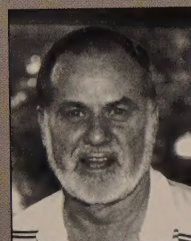
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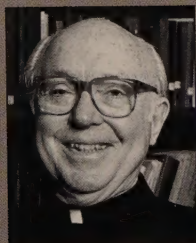
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The quarterly magazine **HUMAN DEVELOPMENT** (ISSN 0197-3096) is published by Regis University. Subscription rate: United States and Canada, \$36.00; all other countries, \$40.00. Online subscription: \$20.00 for one year. Single copies: United States and Canada, \$10.00 plus shipping; all other countries, \$10.00 plus shipping. Non-profit postage rate paid in Denver, Colorado. Postmaster: Send address changes to **HUMAN DEVELOPMENT**, P.O. Box 3000, Dept. HD, Denville, NJ 07834. Copyright 2008 by **HUMAN DEVELOPMENT**. All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopy, recording, or any information storage and retrieval system, without permission in writing from the publisher.

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Letters to the editor and all other correspondence may be sent to: **HUMAN DEVELOPMENT**, 61 Main Street, Suite 2-S, Old Saybrook, CT 06475. Phone: (860) 395-4742 / Fax: (860) 395-4769 / E-mail: jesedcntr@aol.com

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HUMAN DEVELOPMENT

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Manuscripts should be submitted to the Executive Editor, Linda Amadeo, either (1) as e-mail attachments in any Windows-based (not Macintosh) word-processing program from 2000 or earlier or (2) by mail (see addresses below). Unaccepted mailed manuscripts will not be returned unless submitted with a stamped, self-addressed return envelope.

Manuscripts are received with the understanding that they have not been previously published and are not currently under consideration elsewhere. Feature articles should be limited to 4,500 words (15 double-spaced pages), with no more than 6 recommended readings; filler items of between 500 and 1,000 words will be considered. All accepted material is subject to editing. When quoting the Bible, the New Revised Version of the Bible is preferred.

Authors are responsible for the completeness and accuracy of proper names in both text and bibliography. Acknowledgments must be given when substantial material is quoted from other publications. Provide author name(s), title of article, title of journal or book, volume number, page(s), month and year, and publisher's permission to use material.

Letters are welcome and will be published as space permits and at the discretion of the editors. Such communications should not exceed 600 words and are subject to editing.

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Editor's Page

JESUS IS RISEN

You will receive this issue during the Easter season, but I write this page in the depths of winter in New England, U.S.A. Moreover, I write it just after returning from a two-week trip to Nairobi, Kenya where, among other endeavors, I gave the Hekima Forum Lecture that forms the basis of an article in this issue. I was in Nairobi for the last two weeks of Advent and the first days of the Christmas season. The two weeks were uplifting and hopeful. I was received with great hospitality, and the audiences at my talks and workshops were very receptive to my message. The Catholic Church in Kenya, and indeed in the whole of Africa, has experienced an unprecedented growth over the last century. I was told that in 1900 there were only about 4,000 Catholics in Kenya whereas now there are over 10,000,000. At Hekima College, the Jesuit school of theology, there are 56 Jesuits studying theology for priesthood. Other theological schools in Nairobi are bursting with students as are novitiates of religious congregations. I saw evidence of this growth and energy wherever I went. Those two weeks in Nairobi were days of Advent hope indeed.

I also witnessed some of the institutions founded by Catholics that give hope to many who live in abject poverty and with terrible illnesses. For example, I participated in the Sunday Mass at Nyumbani, a home for orphans afflicted with AIDS, a very moving and uplifting experience. Nyumbani (Kiswahili for "home") was begun in 1992 by the late Fr. Angelo D'Agostino S.J., M.D., and Sr. Mary Owens, I.B.V.M., to take care of these children of God who are often shunned. Many of these children would now be dead were it not for the care they receive in Nyumbani and its offshoots.

One afternoon Fr. Terry Charlton, S.J., drove me to one of the densest slums in Africa, a place called Kibera. We walked down narrow, meandering dirt lanes between makeshift houses, with open sewerage flowing in a ditch beside the lanes. The stench was powerful.

Yet, in the middle of this slum Fr. Charlton with the help of many others has built St. Aloysius Gonzaga high school that gives a solid education, as well as two hot meals a day, to children who otherwise would have neither food nor education. The present school is makeshift like the houses in the midst of which it stands, but the Chicago Province of the Society of Jesus is trying to raise \$2 million in order to build a proper school within a ten-minute walk of Kibera. Another sign of Advent hope.

On another day I visited St. Joseph the Worker parish in Kangemi, another slum. Here the Jesuits of the East Africa Province have a church that seats at least 1,000 for three Masses every Sunday and operate a dispensary, a grammar school, a college teaching computer and accounting and other skills, a shop where women from the slum make lovely dolls, vestments, shirts and fine suits that are sold in a shop on the premises. Again a sign of hope in the midst of great suffering.

The midnight Christmas liturgy at Hekima College was a very joyous celebration. The congregation consisted of Jesuits, other religious, and families with children. The Jesuit choir sang with a gusto that was contagious. We sang Christmas carols in at least six languages, four African, plus French and English. Moreover, as I found out afterward, it seemed that the whole world was represented. The Africans came from many countries, and in addition I met people from Japan, Vietnam, Ireland, the Philippines, England, and the United States. We were a microcosm of the world to which Jesus came to bring good news and peace on earth.

As you can gather, these days of Advent and then Christmas were very upbeat. I felt surges of joy and hope, realizing that God's dream was still being brought into being in this dark world. There was one cloud on the horizon. Kenya was in the midst of preparing for general elections on December 27. The race for president was very intense, and there were

worries that there might be violence if the vote were inconclusive and if it looked as though fraud had been a factor. I left the evening of Election Day before the ballot counting was finished.

In the event, the fears proved to be prophetic. As I write, Kenya is engulfed in rioting and killing, and I fear for the friends I made in my time there. Kibera, it seems, was the center of the first rioting that now has spread to other parts of the country. What happened in Kenya reminds us that God's dream is not yet a reality. Moreover, I suspect that for those embroiled in that rioting and in the wars and grinding poverty that beset so much of our planet hope is hard to come by. Perhaps it is hard to come by for all of us who pay attention to what is actually occurring around the globe.

Which brings us to the season when you receive this issue. We celebrate the resurrection of Jesus, the light of the world. Light shines in our darkness, we proclaim; hence, there is nothing to fear. But in the euphoria of Easter we can forget what preceded the resurrection. Jesus died a horrible death on the cross. Moreover, Easter has not ended such horrors. Christ continues to be crucified in this world in countless numbers of people who suffer and die. The people of Kenya can attest to this fact, as can the people of Iraq, of Afghanistan, of Pakistan, of sub-Saharan Africa, etc. One can wonder if the death and resurrection of Jesus has had any lasting effect on our world.

But, the horrors that are now engulfing Kenya do not change the positive realities of Nyumbani and its offshoots, of St. Aloysius Gonzaga High School in Kibera, of St. Joseph the Worker parish in Kangemi. These hopeful signs are as much a part of our world as the horrors. And these and many other such signs would not be there were it not for what happened in Jerusalem 2,000 years ago. God has such womb love, such compassion for us wayward children that God took on our flesh, our nature, and allowed us to batter that human frame without retaliating. "For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life. Indeed, God did not send the Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him" (John 3:16-17). Because human beings have believed this good news, they have been able to live as images of God in this world, and so Nyumbani and St. Aloysius Gonzaga High Schools and their like spring up even in the midst of the worst horrors. There is reason to hope because,

in spite of everything that looks so bleak and dreary, God is with us to stay and the Spirit of Jesus continues to make all things new. Gerard Manley Hopkins captures this hope well in the last lines of "God's Grandeur": "There lives the dearest freshness deep down things;/ And though the last lights off the black West went/ Oh, morning, at the brown brink eastwards, springs—/ Because the Holy Ghost over the bent/ World broods with warm breast and with ah! Bright wings." Jesus is risen and continues to breathe his Spirit on all of us and to tell us, "Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I send you" (John 20:21).

Now let me say something about this issue. A lot of it has to do with our call to be part of God's solution to the problems of our world. In the first article I argue that we are empowered to be the God-bearers in our world, to be other Christs who work with God to bring about God's dream. Joseph Appleyard, S.J., presents a noteworthy example of how spiritual conversation can enhance an educational environment. We are indebted to the *Seminary Journal* for two articles on youth ministry by Robert J. McCarty and by Charlotte McCorquodale and Leigh Sterten. We hope these articles will be helpful to our readers who engage in ministry with youth. Cecilia Raine Huckestein argues that Christian values can pervade the counseling given by Christians in public schools without violating the Constitution's requirement of separation of church and state. Patrick Sean Moffett, C.F.C., presents moving reflections on how the Spirit forms us into disciples of Jesus. With his usual trenchant insight George Wilson, S.J., demonstrates what the call to renewal entails. George Dennis O'Brien raises profound questions about the kind of human development God wants and how to get there. No issue of HUMAN DEVELOPMENT would be complete without a poem and reflection by James Torrens, S.J. In this issue both poem and reflection address the issue of scrupulosity, a state that still afflicts many of us who take our religious lives seriously. Enjoy your reading and happy Easter season.

Bill Barry, S.J.

William A. Barry, S.J.
Editor-in-Chief

Making friends with God in the Real World

William A. Barry, S.J.

This article is based on a talk given at the Hekima Forum for Exploring Faith in Public Life at Hekima College, Nairobi, Kenya, December 15, 2007.

Religion and spirituality sometimes reek of other-worldliness. To be spiritual, it seems, you have to separate yourself from this world. In order to be in touch with God you need to get out of touch with the hurly-burly that is ordinary life. Retreat houses, for example, usually are located in rural areas and have large, private grounds so that you can pray undisturbed. At retreat houses, near the end of a retreat, one hears homilists and retreatants, too often for my taste, speak of returning to the “real world.” Is it true that closeness to God requires distance from ordinary life?

In addition, those who are active in the real world often look with some suspicion, even disdain on religious people who try to give moral or political advice. “Your advice is all well and good, but in the real world it won’t work. You people stick to your prayers and leave the rough and tumble of politics and business to us practical people.” Again, the question recurs: Does closeness to God require distance from ordinary life?

In this article I want to speak of Judeo-Christian spirituality as decidedly for the sake of life in the real world. Spirituality, after all, is about God and what God desires, and God is the creator of the real world in which we are actors.



As I wrote this article, we were in the midst of the Advent season. In our liturgies we heard the great prophecies of the Hebrew bible about what God will do in the future. I have come to believe that these prophecies, most of them from the prophet Isaiah, really tell us about God's dream for our world, and for our world now. In other words, they are not just a foretelling of what will happen; they are, first and foremost, expressions of what God intends with creation itself. For example, in Isaiah God says: "... they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more" (Isaiah 2:4). You will recall others. Rather than just see these prophecies as a future promise, think of them as indications of what God wants for our created world now and always. In other words, these prophecies express God's dream in creating our world.

The first two chapters of Genesis give us two different accounts of creation. In the first chapter the image is of God creating the universe in six days with a generosity and creativity that astounds. God speaks and the various elements of our universe come into being. Finally, God creates human beings, male and female, in God's image and likeness to be God's stewards in the created world.

The second account of creation in chapter two uses the image of the earth as a garden that God and human beings tend together. If you play with this image a bit, you may find yourself noticing once again that God wants us to work together with God in tending the earth. Even the image of God walking in the garden in the evening breeze, which comes in the third chapter, can come into this imaginary picture of God's creation. At the end of a day working in the garden which is this world God and human beings get together to relax and chat over the day, like having a cup of tea or some other beverage and some friendly conversation about the day.

I like to use these images to describe what God dreams for us adults. God wants a world where humans and God work together in harmony and friendship with God, with one another and with the whole created world. We are God's children, created in God's image and likeness, and asked to help God to fulfill the dream for this created world.

Recently, as many readers know, I have been working with the image of parents who have a family business and invite their adult children to join them as a way to grasp what God wants of us. Think of Zebedee, the Galilean fisherman, of the gospels. He probably was brought into the fishing business by his own father. He learned from his father how to fish, but he probably learned some new techniques himself to add to the family business. Now he has two sons, James and John, whom he has invited into the business just as his father invited him. James and John learn from him, but also are expected to use their own skills, brains and ingenuity to develop the business. In the course of working together they develop a mutuality that can be likened to a friendship, a relationship of mutuality between adults who learn to love and respect one another. Imagine his reaction when these two sons leave the business suddenly at the call of Jesus. Perhaps this is why James and John were called "Sons of Thunder" by Jesus.

Now play with this image in relation to God's dream in creating us. God's family business is this world which God wants to be a place where human beings live in harmony and friendship with God, with one another and with the whole creation. But God does not work this dream out like magic. God needs our adult cooperation to bring about his dream for our world. So God, like Zebedee with his two sons, invites us human beings into the family business to be partners with God. And please notice that the family business of God is this actual world we live in, not just the church.

The real world is God's family business. In this real world, and only in it, can God attain the dream. But that dream can only be attained if we, who are created in God's image and likeness, act like such images. The whole creation, of course, is made in the image and likeness of God. God has no other model than God in creating. So human beings should not preen themselves on being the only images of God. However, as far as we know, we are the only self-conscious, thinking and feeling images of God on our planet. We are created to be like God in our self-consciousness, in our thinking and feeling and acting. In other words, since we act not just from instinct but also from intention, we are created to act in harmony with God's intention for the world. That's the awful and exhilarating challenge

of being human. Because, like God, we must choose how to act, we can choose to act in harmony with God's dream or to act out of harmony with God's dream.

HUMAN FOLLY

Like a son or daughter invited into their parents' family business, we can say no. For the sons of Zebedee, however, the choice to leave the family business might not have disastrous consequences, especially if Zebedee comes to accept their choice. After all, whether James and John continue in the fishing business or not does not have to be the end of the business for Zebedee. It just won't continue to be in the family after Zebedee is gone. But with God's family business it's not that easy. God cannot have what God wants from the family business, a world where human beings are friends of God, of one another and live in harmony with the rest of creation, without our cooperation. Nor can we have what we most want in this world, namely to live in peace and harmony with God, with our fellow human beings and with the rest of creation, if we refuse to cooperate in God's family business.

Chapter three of Genesis tells the story of how our first parents refused to join God's family business with disastrous consequences for them and for the whole creation. Let's play around with the image presented there. They were told that they could eat of all the trees of the garden except for the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. As you know, in the bible knowledge is not just head knowledge, but heart knowledge, a knowledge that comes from experience. The only way to know the difference between good and evil is to experience the difference; you have to do something good and something evil or you have to experience the effects of someone else's acts of good and evil to know the difference. No one needs to have that experience in order to be a full human being. So they were well off not knowing the difference. But the serpent insinuates that God does not want them to know the difference because then they would be like God and would live forever. The stupid thing is that they are already like God and will live forever because God wants them to exist. But the serpent insinuates that God does not want them to be like God, and that's why God forbade them to eat of this tree. So they disobey God in order to become like God.

It's crazy, isn't it? They come to believe that God is a rival, and that they can become like God by their own efforts and be in control of their existence on their

We human beings have no control over our coming into existence or continuing in existence.

own. But, in fact, the only way they can exist at all and continue to exist forever is because God wants them to exist forever. We human beings have no control over our coming into existence or continuing in existence. It all depends on God. But we crazily believe that we can gain control of our existence and lives. In disobeying God to become like God, of course, we act against our own good and the good of the world, and are less like God. A nightmare indeed!

The bible illustrates the consequences of this folly. Adam and Eve are ashamed, clothe themselves and hide from God. Their son Cain kills his brother Abel. Men rape and kill and commit incest. Finally in chapter 11 of Genesis the nadir of these consequences occurs for the human family when at the tower of Babel we lose the ability to communicate with one another. The opposite of God's dream seems to be happening. All the horrors of human history, the history of human inhumanity, can be traced to the desire of human beings to become like God apart from and in rivalry with God. What we have by God's good will and grace alone we want to secure by our own efforts because we do not trust God. Ultimately, the disastrous condition of our world comes down to idolatry, to making ourselves or something we think we need for our survival into our God.

THE PROMISE OF THE MESSIAH

God, thank God, has not given up on us in spite of our folly. Right after the tower of Babel story chapter twelve of Genesis begins the story of Abram and Sarai who are called to trust in God, to become God's friends, and to begin the chosen people through whom God would continue to work out the great dream. These people, the Israelites, in a long history of fidelity and infidelity kept alive the dream of God through

In Jesus we see what it means to live as an image of God.

their stories, their songs, their holy books. They kept alive the promise that God would do something even more marvelous than the Exodus from slavery in Egypt, more marvelous than bringing them back to the promised land from captivity in Babylon. They kept alive the promise of an Anointed One, the Messiah, the Christ, who would bring about the dream of God, the dream detailed in the prophecies of Isaiah mentioned earlier. This Messiah was a mysterious figure, but he would be the one-off intervention of God in history who would inaugurate God's dream, God's rule of peace on earth and good will among human beings.

We Christians believe that Jesus of Nazareth is that one-off Messiah. We believe that he was and is God's very presence in human flesh. In other words, he is the one who is preeminently the image of God because he is also God incarnate. In Jesus we see what it means to live as an image of God. We must not let our belief in Jesus' divinity dilute the fact that he was and is a real human being like us in all things except sin. He is not some superhuman being whom we can admire, but not imitate. He is flesh of our flesh, as limited and mortal as we are.

To solidify the point that we are made for friendship with God, let me reflect with you about Jesus and his relationship with the One he called Abba, dear Father. Jesus said of himself, "I and the Father are one," and he often spoke and acted as only God had spoken and acted in Israel's history. He was clearly not the one he called "dear Father," yet he showed an equality with God that can only be explained by saying that he was God. Christians have come to speak of the one God as relational because of our experience of Jesus and of our own life in the one Jesus called the Paraclete or Spirit. The relations within the one God are relations of equality and love, relationships of friendship, in our human terms. So there is friendship within God, we would have to say.

Now Jesus is a human being. He needed to grow and mature toward adulthood just the way we do. As a child his relationship to Abba was that of a child. But when he became an adult, he had to figure out his vocation, had to discover, in other words, that he was the Messiah and how to be the Messiah. In Jesus' time there were many notions of how the Messiah would act. The temptations in the desert are temptations about these ways to be the Messiah. He can use his powers to feed himself, to make a great splash so that people would believe in him as God's emissary, or to use military power to win over all nations. But Jesus saw these possibilities as seductions, as temptations, not what God wanted. Later when Peter recognized Jesus as the Messiah, Jesus told him and the other disciples that he would have to undergo suffering and death at the hands of the Romans, not lead an army against these same Romans. Peter then rebuked Jesus and told him that this could not be. Jesus called Peter Satan, the tempter, trying to tempt him away from this "awful" way to be the Messiah, which Jesus saw was the way to the attainment of God's dream, the crazy way to God's victory.

In the garden of olives the night before his death Jesus prayed to God to take this burden from him, but then left everything in God's hands. As we contemplate the life of Jesus, we begin to see how he developed into a mature friend of his Abba, one who could question whether the way of the cross really was the way to win God's victory, to bring about God's rule or kingdom in this world. It must have cost him a great deal of soul-searching to come to this notion of being the Messiah; it was contrary to most of what his own religion taught him. We know from Mark's gospel that his family at one point wondered if he was crazy and that the religious leaders thought him possessed by a demon. Perhaps Jesus himself had to come to terms with whether he was crazy or possessed to think and act the way he was acting. I can imagine him wrestling with Abba to be sure that this was the right way, that the way of the Suffering Servant of Isaiah was to be his way as the Messiah. So Jesus, I would like to say, has, as a human being, grown into an adult friend of Abba engaged in the family business.

OUR FRIENDSHIP WITH GOD

Now, what does this all have to do with us? Well, we are created as images of God, and as Christians are called to be other Christs in this world. At the Last

upper Jesus said to his disciples, and therefore to all of us adult followers:

You are my friends if you do what I command you. I do not call you servants any longer, because the servant does not know what the master is doing; but I have called you friends, because I have made known to you everything that I have heard from my Father. You did not choose me but I chose you. And I appointed you to go and bear fruit, fruit that will last, so that the Father will give you whatever you ask him in my name. I am giving you these commands so that you may love one another (John 15:14-17).

And after the resurrection Jesus returns to the upper room and says, "Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I send you" and breathed on them, thus indicating that he was giving them the breath or Spirit of God (John 20:21-22). John sets up this scene in the Upper Room as a new or renewed creation story. We, who were created to be the image-bearers of God by the breath or spirit of God, now receive that Spirit in a new and even more intimate way so that we can be who we are created to be, images of God, friends of God, other Christs.

PRACTICAL CONSEQUENCES

I am aware that what I have said so far can sound like pious spirituality, a spirituality that has little to do with real life. But remember that we started with God creating this real world and doing it with a dream and hope for how it would develop. If what I have been saying is true, and Christians profess that it is, then this spirituality of friendship with God is what God creates us for. We are created to become friends of God and to cooperate with God in the family business which is to develop a world where the lion does sit down with the lamb, where swords are beaten into ploughshares, where all God's children live in peace. All of us adults are invited into God's family business, invited to become friends of God and prophets. Jesus calls us his friends and sends us out into this real world in the same way he was sent out into this real world. Each of us is called to follow Jesus, not to imitate him slavishly, but to discern what our role in God's family business is to be and how we are to live out our vocation as God-

bearers, as adult friends of God in our time and place and circumstances. We can choose to sit out the call, but if we do so, we are part of the problem of our world, not part of the solution. What does it mean, then, in the real world to be a friend of God, an image-bearer of God, another Christ?

FRIENDS OF GOD

It means to be a friend of God wherever life places us. We don't, necessarily, have to change what we are now doing in order to become part of the solution. We just have to begin taking seriously that we are images of God, other Christs, wherever life places us. Try to think of the most unlikely person to whom this idea of an adult friendship in the family business of God could apply. Let's consider a prisoner wrongfully sent to prison for life. He could just spend all his waking hours bewailing his fate and hating those who have put him in this situation. But he, too, is asked to be an adult friend of God, to discern how to act in his circumstances. Africa has given the world any number of examples of unjustly imprisoned people who have become adult friends of God. Nelson Mandela, for example, electrified the world by showing such magnanimity after his release from prison, leading South Africa toward being a unified country. In Massachusetts I visit such a prisoner who has found hope and life in trying to do what he can to change things in the neighborhoods from which he came. So even in the most unlikely situations we can choose to live as friends of God and part of God's solution to our world's problems.

We don't have to become monks or nuns or ministers in order to become part of God's family business. Just recall that Jesus was not a priest in his religion; he had no status that singled him out to act as he did. He was just what all of us are, an image of God, a human being called to live as God would live in this world. Notice how Jesus reacted to Zacchaeus, the chief tax collector in Jericho, mentioned in Luke 19:1-10. As a chief tax collector, Zacchaeus was hated by his fellow Jews in Jericho because he was enriching himself at their expense and also collaborating with the hated Romans. He was the last person his fellow Jews would have wanted to have dinner with. But Jesus saw him up in that sycamore tree, called out to him to come down because Jesus wanted to have dinner at his house. Now usually preachers concentrate on Zacchaeus' eagerness to see Jesus as the thing that draws Jesus' attention.

God is forgiving love.

Let's suppose that Zacchaeus is angrily looking down at Jesus, that he went up into the tree just out of idle curiosity and now looks at Jesus with some contempt. "This Jesus isn't much to look at; he doesn't have much money. What's all the fuss about?" he might be saying to himself. Now hear Jesus' words and realize that Jesus looks beyond the surface of the man, sees some spark of humanity and with humor says, "Hey, Zacchaeus, come on down; let's have dinner together." Perhaps just by going beyond the surface and touching that spark of humanity Jesus awakens something deeply buried in Zacchaeus.

I was prompted to read the story of Zacchaeus in this way by the novel *Eternity, My Beloved*, a translation from the French of Jean Sullivan, the pen name of a priest in France. It's a story about a worker priest, Jerome Strozzi, after the Second World War. Strozzi had been a seminary professor, but something happened to him that drew him to spend the latter part of his life in the "Red Light" district of Paris, befriending prostitutes and pimps. He did not try to convert them; he just spent time with them and gradually became their friend and helped them out. Many changed their lives as a result, but they did not become angels, just more alive and loving human beings. At one point in the novel the narrator asks a question.

"Jerome Strozzi, quote me the first phrase of the Gospel that comes to your mind."

"I am the life."

There's no hesitation—the answer flashes out. In dealing with the men and women he encounters every day, he has the heartbreaking sense of a humanity that is not quite human, but which desperately longs to be so. When he's about to meet someone, he has one prayer: "Through me let her find what she is

looking for. Let me try to be the other, and bring to life in myself what, in spite of appearances, is true in her." Strozzi has a love for life even in its lowest manifestations. On its every level he has an intimation of that which transcends life's limits" (pp. 125-126).

Like Jesus with Zacchaeus Strozzi looks for the often deeply hidden spark of humanity that desperately longs to come to life in the prostitutes and pimps and other broken people he encounters. Can't we all do as much in our ordinary dealings with those we meet? Try to meet them as fellow human beings who are longing to experience the peace that surpasses all understanding, the peace God dreams for all of us? You'll notice that Strozzi prayed before he went out to meet people, prayed that he might be able to let others find what they are most deeply looking for. Every day before we leave our homes, we could pray as Strozzi did. God only knows how much our world would be different if we all did that much.

FORGIVENESS

A prayerful reading of the Bible reveals to us a God who is forgiving. Over and over throughout history human beings have found that God reaches out to embrace them when they confess their sins. God is forgiving love. The best example of the forgiving nature of God occurred on that Friday we call Good when Jesus, dying horribly on the cross, said, "Father, forgive them; for they do not know what they are doing" (Luke 23:34). God, Abba, sustained the world while this horror was enacted and did not retaliate in kind. If we are to image God, then, we must forgive those who have offended us. Again Africa has given the world models of such images of God in South Africa, in Rwanda and in many other places.

Forgiveness is one of the most difficult aspects of God for us to emulate. Forgiveness runs counter to our sense of justice, to our desire for vengeance, to our sense of the rightness of things. Yet God is forgiving love. And we who are images of God are called to be a forgiving people. Some of the most moving examples of such images of God come from Archbishop Desmond Tutu's book about the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in South Africa. Aptly he titles the book, *No Future Without Forgiveness*. His examples of uncommon forgiveness include white and black South Africans, although, not

surprisingly, the majority by far are blacks, the ones who suffered the most from the evils of Apartheid.

One example was especially touching. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission held a hearing on the Bisho massacre in Bisho itself. The massacre occurred in September, 1992, when South African soldiers, many of them black, were ordered by their white commanders to fire on unarmed peaceful marchers from the African National Congress resulting in the deaths of thirty people. As the hearing opened in Bisho the audience, many of whom were related to or knew those killed, were quite hostile and made even more hostile by the testimony of a major general of the army. Then Colonel Horst Schobesberger, one of the officers who gave the orders to shoot, spoke:

I say we are sorry. I say the burden of the Bisho massacre will be on our shoulders for the rest of our lives. We cannot wish it away. It happened. But please, I ask specifically the victims, not to forget, I cannot ask this, but to forgive us, to get the soldiers back into the community, to accept them fully, to try to understand also the pressure they were under then. This is all I can do. I'm sorry, this I can say, I'm sorry.

Tutu writes: "That crowd, which had been close to smothering them, did something quite unexpected. It broke out into thunderous applause! Unbelievable! The mood change was startling." He then spoke to the crowd, asking them to observe a moment's silence. "It isn't easy, as we all know, to ask for forgiveness and it's also not easy to forgive, but we are people who know that when someone cannot be forgiven there is no future" (p. 150-151). The Spirit of God was powerfully active in that room, and ordinary people allowed their hearts to be touched to ask for forgiveness and to give it. Forgiveness is possible because we are made in the image and likeness of God. And, as Archbishop Tutu reminds us, our future and the future of our world, of God's business, depend on our being able to ask for and to give forgiveness.

COMPASSION

Finally, the God revealed in the bible is a God of compassion. The Hebrew word translated as compassion, *hesed*, is related to the Hebrew word for womb. So compassion is womb love. God has such womb love for

Every human being, no matter how different from us or even seemingly depraved, longs for God because God longs for him or her.

the human family that God risks self for us. God risks our non-cooperation in the family business as one example. Most importantly God risks becoming a human being for love of us wayward, often inhuman human beings. Jesus tells the story of the Good Samaritan in response to the question, "Who is my neighbor?" The story shows us how to be an image of God, a human being. The two Jewish religious leaders pass by their fellow Jew who has been mugged and robbed, now lying by the side of the road. Something keeps them from having compassion. But the Samaritan, moved with compassion (womb love) for this poor Jew, stops to take care of him. He risks being mugged and robbed himself, and he loses time and money in order to care for this man who belongs to an enemy people. Our neighbor is any human being who needs our help. God is moved with compassion, womb love, for any human being in need; those of us made in God's image are also moved with such compassion. But we must act on these movements of compassion.

Every human being, no matter how different from us or even seemingly depraved, longs for God because God longs for him or her. God's longing creates every one of us, and that longing of God evokes in us a longing for God. That is the spark Jesus saw in Zacchaeus; that Jerome Strozzi, the priest in the novel, *Eternity, My Beloved*, based on a real priest in Paris, saw in his friends, the prostitutes and pimps; that Nelson Mandela saw in his white jailer whom he invited to his inauguration as President of South Africa; that the South Africans in the hostile audience at Bisho saw in the white officer who asked for forgiveness. These things happened in the real world. Because ordinary people responded to movements of compassion and forgiveness they became part of God's solution for our planet, cooperators in furthering God's dream of a world where all men and women would live in friendship with God, with

one another and with the whole created world. They showed, in their actions, that they were friends of God.

CONCLUSION

In Luke's gospel Jesus enters Jerusalem for the last time riding on a donkey and weeping. I invite you to listen to this scene from Jesus' perspective. He believes that he is the Messiah, the only one ever to be, who ushers in the final chapter of the fulfillment of God's dream. He is the way, the truth and the life, there is no other way to be human than his way. He has desperately tried to convince his people of this reality, but they have not wanted to repent and believe the good news. Now listen to what Luke writes:

As he came near and saw the city, he wept over it, saying, "If you, even you, had only recognized on this day the things that make for peace! But now they are hidden from your eyes. Indeed, the days will come upon you, when your enemies will set up ramparts around you and surround you, and hem you in on every side. They will crush you to the ground, you and your children within you, and they will not leave within you one stone upon another; because you did not recognize the time of your visitation from God" (Luke 19:41-44).

Jesus is heartbroken that God's risk has not been accepted by God's own people, that they have not known what was for their peace and for the peace of the world. He weeps because they still do not get it, that God wants their friendship, not their rivalry, nor their subservience,

nor their willingness to fight battles for God.

Now imagine Jesus looking down on Washington D.C. or any other capital city of our world. Is he still weeping that we have not known the things that make for peace? What will wipe those tears of Jesus away? You and I, and all of us together can be part of the solution to Jesus' tears. We can accept the offer of friendship. To be a friend of God is not easy; a spirituality of friendship does not bring cheap grace. God has taken the risk of creating us for friendship and even of joining us in this vale of tears and joys. Can you think of anything better to do with your life than to accept God's offer of friendship and to join in the family business founded on the dream of a planet where the lion and the lamb, the Jew and the Palestinian, the Muslim, the Jew, the Buddhist, the animist, the atheist and the Christian sit down together? I cannot think of anything better.

RECOMMENDED READING

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An Experience of Ignatian Conversation

Joseph A. Appleyard, S.J.



For six years, significant numbers of faculty and administrative staff at Boston College have participated in a seminar that might plausibly be called an experience of Ignatian conversation, though this was not the original intent in forming the seminars. The lessons we have learned from this seminar might be useful to readers who share an interest in one or more themes that show up in contemporary religious culture: the phenomenon of people, young adults especially, who identify themselves as spiritual but not religious; the developmental journey and in particular the process of vocational discernment; the effort, especially in educational institutions, to articulate what is distinctively "Catholic" and "Jesuit" (or some other congregational charism) about these ministries; and the burgeoning of practices that *translate* or *apply* traditional spiritualities, such as Ignatian spirituality, into forms suited to new audiences and new needs. So, though what will be offered here is an account of a particular experience in one Jesuit university, its implications may be helpful to readers who are engaged in any of these broader topics.

WHAT HAPPENED IN THE SEMINARS

The Intersections seminars at Boston College (BC) were begun in 2001. The Lilly Endowment had invited a number of religiously-affil-

A fundamental choice was to involve equal numbers of faculty members and administrative staff into the seminars—usually ten of each.

iated colleges and universities to apply for grants of up to \$2 million to develop programs that would help students reflect on their life choices from a faith perspective. At BC we conceptualized a number of ways of helping students engage in what we came to call vocational discernment. We knew that numerous academic, co-curricular, and extra-curricular activities already had a significant impact on students. It was a cliché that students would return from service programs and retreats saying “it changed my life,” but we knew that these effects were often transient and compartmentalized. What was needed, we thought, was something that helped students connect the different parts of their lives and discover how these experiences shaped their unfolding developmental journeys. We gave the name “Intersections” to the cluster of programs we developed.

As we planned the student activities, we also envisioned a seminar for faculty and administrative staff—ten three-hours sessions, offered three times a year, in the fall and spring semesters and during the summer. Initially, our intention was simply the hope that the seminar would raise awareness about the issues involved in student development and vocational discernment and make it more likely participants would get involved in the student programs. But we made some decisions about the structure and style of the seminar that turned out to have unexpected results.

A fundamental choice was to invite equal numbers of faculty members and administrative staff into the seminars—usually ten of each. This was a new experience for most participants. As strange as it may sound, we discovered that faculty and staff rarely talk to one another for any length of time and certainly not about substantive matters. Asymmetries of status as well as ever intensifying professional specialization seem to divide people into groups that seldom communicate except about particular matters of business or at social events. Boston College is a middle-sized university—

with about 9000 undergraduates, 5000 graduate and professional students, and some 700 full-time faculty among 3300 employees, yet we found seminar participants who had worked at BC for twenty years who did not know each other, and sometimes didn't even know that the offices and departments in which the others worked existed or what they did.

A second significant decision had to do with the content of the seminar. The invitation we sent to participants was to join a conversation about “their role in the education of students,” and we put a number of broad topics on the agenda—what it means to be a human being, the goals of a university, the psychological development of young adults, and how students typically make decisions. But we decided from the start that we would view all these topics through the lens of Ignatian spirituality. Thus, we assigned among the weekly readings the *Autobiography* of Ignatius Loyola and several essays by writers about Ignatian spirituality and the principles of Jesuit education. In each of the weekly sessions, we examined key notions from this spiritual tradition as a way of giving participants a framework and a shared language for their thinking about students' development.

Perhaps the most important early decision we made was not a considered decision at all but a last-minute inspiration at the start of the first session of the first seminar. Instead of going around the table in the usual fashion and asking participants to rattle off their names and the departments where they worked, the two chairs (both Jesuits) decided to ask participants to say something about the vocational journeys that had brought them to their current jobs. The chairs spoke first, to model the process. Each of us improvised for a few minutes a miniature autobiography, not in any especially deep or self-disclosing way. The results could not have been more astonishing. After the inevitable awkward pause, someone else spoke up and told her story, then other participants eagerly took their turns. People spoke about their professional lives, of course, but also about their families and their marriages, problems with their children, their religious doubts and searches, issues with alcohol and sexual orientation, why they liked working at BC, and where they felt BC failed to live up to its ideals.

That first day we found that it took most of three hours to get through twenty stories. My initial reaction was impatience and a desire to get back to our plan for the session. Only slowly, after a number of meetings, did I realize that beginning this way had set a crucial tone for the rest of the seminar. It established impor-

ground rules: the seminar would be about students but it would also be about the participants themselves; it would be about their professional lives but also, if they thought it appropriate, about their personal lives; and it would be a venue where participants could safely address topics they seldom had opportunities to talk about, where they could work out connections between the complex dimensions of their lives. In six years of seminars, we have begun every seminar the same way, with the same results.

The ten sessions of each seminar are by no means an extended encounter group or sensitivity-training experience. We read books and essays and have several guest presenters on a variety of topics having to do with the idea of the university, the Ignatian vision of the human, the psychology of young adult development, data about the demographic composition of the BC student body and about students' behaviors and attitudes, diversity, intimacy and relationships, career choices and life after college. But it is always clear that participants understand they are free to talk about their own hopes and fears around any of these topics.

THE IMPACT ON PARTICIPANTS

Some 350 faculty and staff have participated in the seminars since the summer of 2001. Five years into the seminars we surveyed participants to get a sense of the impact the seminars were having. Overwhelming percentages of the respondents reported:

They highly valued the interactions in the seminar between colleagues from different areas of the university, especially between faculty and staff.

As a result of the seminar they were more likely to get involved in advising students not only about academic matters but also about their vocational journeys and their personal lives.

They would be interested in participating in retreats and immersion and service programs with colleagues.

The seminars deepened their understanding of the religious and spiritual dimensions of Boston College's mission, BC as a Catholic university, and especially the Jesuit educational tradition and the Ignatian tradition of fostering discernment among students.

Since the seminar they had gotten into conversations with students, colleagues, and even spouses and family members about these topics.

Since the seminar they had spent more time in prayer and meditation and in reading about topics

raised in the seminar.

- Senior faculty and staff reported that they felt more comfortable talking to younger colleagues about Jesuit education and the religious dimensions of BC's mission.

It is clear that the seminar achieved its original goal of raising the level of awareness about the role faculty and staff can play in the developmental growth of undergraduates and increasing their involvement in students' lives. Equally significantly, the seminar has been a vehicle for raising participants' consciousness about the foundational principles of Jesuit education and giving them a framework and a language for thinking about their work in a Jesuit university.

WIDER IMPLICATIONS AND TWO HYPOTHESES

These survey data and other abundant anecdotal evidence tell us something about the immediate impact of the seminars on participants. More interesting to me—as someone whose work entails trying to understand how the Catholic and Jesuit dimensions of the university's mission can be embedded in the university's collective consciousness and in its organizational systems—is the possibility that the seminars may have something to teach us about a distinctive way of being a Jesuit university.

I suggest two hypotheses. First, that the seminars can be thought of as an exercise of applied Ignatian spirituality, in the sense not only that the participants come to *understand* something about Ignatian spirituality as the foundation of Jesuit education but also that the seminar was itself an *experience* of moving through a central dynamic of Ignatian spirituality. And, second, that the seminars and this experiential dynamic provide a model for a fresh understanding of how all the central activities of a university might operate in an Ignatian mode. These hypotheses need some unpacking.

AN EXERCISE OF APPLIED IGNATIAN SPIRITUALITY

The core experience of Ignatian spirituality has always been the full Spiritual Exercises. One might devote a month to them fulltime or a significant part of each day for several months and, depending on the timetable, meet daily or weekly with a director. In either case, one would work through all the individual exercises of the four "weeks" or major structural divisions of the Exercises. But even Ignatius understood that most

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people would not have the time to do this or be ready for the experience, and he acknowledged (in the 18th preliminary note in the text) that some version of the core elements of the Exercises, adapted to the needs of individuals, could still have a significant impact on their spiritual lives. Today, hundreds of adaptations are being tried in different settings to suit different needs. I have come to see the Intersections seminars as one of these adaptations, an especially significant one for the project of Jesuit university education.

If the seminar is an authentic adaptation of Ignatian spirituality, it will embody core elements of its source. I mentioned that we asked participants to read the *Autobiography* of St. Ignatius. As we looked for ways to elucidate the foundational elements of Ignatian spirituality for seminar participants, we gradually came to see that there is a three-part dynamic that runs through the early chapters of the *Autobiography*.

Ignatius begins by telling us that he had no sense of an interior life until at the age of 29 or 30 he was wounded in battle and taken to his family's home at Loyola where he underwent more surgeries on his leg and spent months recovering. From the age of 13 he had led the active life of an apprentice administrator at the royal court and, when his first patron died, the rough life of a soldier. His education was in the manners, values, and political attitudes of an ambitious member of the Spanish ruling class. It was only during the long weeks of his convalescence that he began to pay attention to his thoughts and especially his feelings and to notice the different ways they tugged at his spirit. The piety of his childhood began to emerge counterpoised to visions of knightly gallantry. But paying attention to his thoughts and feelings was not enough. He found he had to sort through and analyze these experiences, in particular the experiences of consolation and desolation, to determine which ones were of God and which ones might be from the evil spirit and in what direction they led him. And, crucially important for Ignatius, such a discernment was incomplete unless it led

to insight about the choices he should make about his future life, for he had decided that his goal was to imitate Jesus and his disciples in helping people in their needs.

For the purposes of the seminar, we distilled these movements in Ignatius's spiritual life in three short phrases that we thought captured the essential dynamic at work in them: 1. pay attention to your experience, 2. reflect on its significance, and 3. make choices accordingly.

Those with long experience in Ignatian spirituality might think this a reductive caricature, and it is true that no formula can do justice to the whole experience Ignatius was describing. But in defense of such formulas, and this formula in particular, one can appeal to a Jesuit tradition of using shorthand summaries to make complex realities intelligible.

Jerome Nadal, for example, one of Ignatius' closest collaborators, was given the task of traveling around Europe and explaining the Society to its younger members before Ignatius had finished writing the *Constitutions*. He was a notable phrasemaker and one of the ways he frequently described Jesuit style was as a life lived *spiritu, corde, et practice*. The Jesuit writer Howard Gray points out another triad in the *Constitutions* where Ignatius wrote that younger Jesuits should be animated by a spirit of *attention, reverence, and devotion*. When the historian of the early Jesuits, John W. O'Malley, S.J., describes the distinctive characteristics of Ignatian spirituality that influenced the schools the early Jesuits established in such great numbers, he mentions three: *the primacy of personal experience, a world-friendly spirituality, and the conviction that Christian life is a call to service*. And, to cite a more recent example, a 1993 document from the Jesuit headquarters in Rome characterizes a distinctive "Ignatian pedagogy" as an interplay among three central elements: *experience, reflection, and action* (the text subsequently adds attention to the *context* in which these elements operate and an ongoing process of *evaluating* the outcomes).

The terms in all these triads are not perfectly equivalent, to be sure, but when aligned they suggest a somewhat consistent three-part process that begins in attention to experience and awareness that this is of God, moves through some kind of reflective discernment, and ends in decisions about practical action. The term discernment is often applied to the whole process as well.

As the seminars continued, we realized that not only was this three-part dynamic useful in explaining the central movement in Ignatian spirituality, it was also the dynamic of the seminar itself: a constant inter-

may of inviting participants to pay attention to their experience, encouraging them to reflect on its meaning, and at the end of the seminar nudging them towards decisions about how they might see their work at the university differently as a result of the seminar.

TRUSTING CONVERSATION

One of the books we assigned in the seminar provided a crucial insight into this symmetry between the explanation of the dynamic and the experience of the seminar itself. Willi Lambert's *Directions for Communication* (2000). A German Jesuit and an experienced spiritual director, Lambert takes an unusual approach to Ignatian spirituality, interpreting it as a theory of communication.

Lambert comes to this insight by studying the instructions Ignatius gave to the three Jesuits he sent as official theologians to the Council of Trent in 1546. Aware that church politics and issues of reform were likely to prove contentious among the cardinals and bishops at the council, and remembering perhaps the lessons he had learned at the Spanish court, Ignatius cautions his Jesuit brothers: value opportunities for conversation; be slow to speak; when you do speak, speak carefully and affectionately; listen attentively especially to the feelings behind others' words; try to recognize the truth in everyone's position so that no one is left unsatisfied by what you say; when you have to state a contrary position do so calmly and with humility, acknowledging that there might be a better opinion; allow every conversation the time it needs.

For Lambert, these are not only practices of effective diplomacy but expressions of the foundational grace Ignatius experienced and gradually came to understand at Loyola and Manresa: that in all his thoughts and feelings and in the experiences and encounters of his daily life God was communicating directly with him, that is, deepening the *communio* between them. Moreover, this is how God communicates with all created beings, sustaining them in existence and leading them to fulfill God's purpose. This insight, in turn, supplied the method by which Ignatius would deal with others who sought his advice: conversation that would help them come to a deeper awareness of how God is at work in their lives, acquire the freedom to respond with open hearts, and so join their lives to God's purpose. In doing so, he was placing a radical trust in the *process*: if his interlocutors attentively and honestly explored how God

was working in their experience, God's hopes and desires for them would become apparent.

So central was this understanding of communication and Ignatius's trust in the process that he inserted it into the text of the *Spiritual Exercises* in the important 15th preliminary annotation, where he addresses the one directing the Exercises saying that the goal of the Exercises is that God communicate directly with the devout soul and that the director should not get in the way of this communication. And when Ignatius suggests the graces the one making the Exercises should experience at the culmination of his or her journey, in contemplating the risen life of Jesus and asking to experience God's love, he says that what is characteristic of love is that it is a form of communication in which lovers share with each other what is most important to them. So, as God's love is manifest in God's sharing God's life with us, we in turn enter more deeply into that love by sharing our gifts with God and with others.

As the seminar chairs thought about what was happening in the seminar, it seemed to us that the seminar was a success because, in trying to follow our instincts and be faithful to our sense of Ignatian spirituality, we developed a style of facilitating the seminar that embodied the instructions Ignatius gave the Jesuits going to Trent. The seminar became an experience of effective communication, of learning how to communicate effectively. It was, we increasingly said in the final session of each seminar, an experience of doing Ignatian spirituality.

A MODEL FOR AN IGNATIAN WAY OF BEING A UNIVERSITY

If Lambert's insight into Ignatian spirituality as a theory of communication helps us understand what was going on in the seminars, it also allows a more far reaching hypothesis: that the experience of Ignatian conversation in the seminars can be extrapolated into an understanding of the university as essentially a conversation and that there is a distinctively Jesuit or Ignatian way of pursuing this conversation.

Lambert suggests that the instructions Ignatius gave to his colleagues going to Trent epitomize a strategy Jesuits employed in all their ministries. John O'Malley has noted that when the early Jesuits searched for a way of explaining what was distinctive about their activities—such as preaching, teaching, writing, hearing confessions, ministering to the sick—these men who had degrees in theology and philosophy from the University of Paris often said they were engaged in “ministries of the word.” Lambert makes

The more fully we explore and enact
our humanity, the more deeply
we share in the life of God.

the interesting suggestion that, whatever the particular ministry, their overall strategy in them was to engage in “expert conversation,” that is, they had absorbed the dynamic of the Exercises and had become skilled in facilitating others’ movement through this dynamic.

To adapt this idea to the contemporary Jesuit university I suggest three steps:

1. Envisioning the university as a network of conversations that deepen our understanding of what it means to be human beings and how, therefore, we should act.
2. Adding Lambert’s suggestion that there is a distinctively Ignatian or Jesuit way of engaging in these conversations, which moves participants toward the realization that their reflection and their decisions are deepening their relationship to God.
3. And noticing that it isn’t only Jesuits who can be “experts” in these conversations but in principle anyone in the university.

It is fairly simple to make the case that communication is at the heart of the university. Lectures, seminars, tutorials, laboratories, advising and mentoring sessions, exams, internships, counseling appointments, and planning meetings can all be understood as interactions that not only rely on but, indeed, are forms of communication. The same can be said of academic rituals, liturgies, sports events, research projects, and almost any administrative activity or human contact among students, faculty, staff, and the public. And when the university puts its knowledge and its wisdom to use for the good of the wider community, the process necessarily involves forms of communication. Any college or university, we might say then, is a system of communication whose medium is conversation.

I have already suggested how the distinctively Ignatian or Jesuit approach to these conversations might proceed. Ignatius’ instructions to the Jesuits going to the Council of Trent are a good example. The style we gradually learned in the Intersections semi-

nars is another. The various mantras that articulate the constitutive elements of Ignatian spirituality and their central movement—such as Nadal’s early formula, the Ignatian pedagogical paradigm, and the three-part dynamic of paying attention, reflecting, and deciding—that we found useful in the Intersections seminars—suggest further ways of envisioning an Ignatian mode of conversation. It hardly needs to be said that this set of practices serves well in a cultural context in which diverse backgrounds of religion, race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, and economic and social capital all influence the attitudes and convictions that members of the university community bring to the conversation.

COMMUNICATION THAT WORKS IN BOTH DIRECTIONS

But can we suppose that the university’s conversations, even conducted in a characteristically Ignatian manner, will necessarily lead to a deeper experience of *communio* with God? Clearly, most of the participants won’t assume this at all. One can hardly imagine a notion more foreign to contemporary university culture. Yet there is a startling implication in Ignatius’s insight that God was communicating directly with him in all his experiences. The same implication inheres in the idea of the Incarnation, as theologian Michael Himes understands it: the communication must work in *both* directions. That is, the more fully we explore and enact our humanity, the more deeply we share in the life of God. A university is one of the preeminent institutions human culture has created for exploring and deepening our understanding of what it means to be human and of sharing that wisdom in ways that benefit the human community. Therefore, to live and work there must also—in Himes’ view—be a way of growing into *communio* with God.

So we might think of a double perspective on what an Ignatian style of conversation can achieve in a university. Some will see it as valuable because it fosters human flourishing and the shared human good, others because they are convinced that fostering human flourishing and the shared human good lead to a deeper sharing in the life of God and align our lives with God’s dream for creation. Do these two perspectives ever come together? If we start with one, do we necessarily move toward the other? Ignatius did not see them as discontinuous. His trust in what God had taught him at Manresa was fundamentally a trust in what God was doing in the created world and in human culture, as

ell as in his own experience. From this point of view, we are articulating and constructing the human good, we are deepening our communication with God.

Articulating and *constructing* are important notions here, for two reasons. The human good is always under construction, the product of study, experiment, evaluation, and more study, experiment and evaluation; a university is one of the central venues where this happens. But the God-ward direction of this process of constructing the human good won't necessarily be understood unless there is an effort to articulate and intentionally construct it. That is the important function, in a Jesuit university, of what I have been calling Ignatian conversation—it is an intentional way of moving towards fusing the two perspectives.

Who are the “experts” in this conversation? In some sense, of course, those who are knowledgeable about and experienced in the practice of Ignatian spirituality will play important roles in articulating the God-ward direction of the conversation. But, in another important sense, everyone in the university can play a role in articulating what constitutes the shared human good and constructing it. Expertise comes in many forms—the specialized knowledge of the economist or biblical scholar with advanced degrees; the practical wisdom of the residence-hall director or basketball coach who has worked many years in a particular area; even, in a community where so many are in their teens and twenties, the far from negligible expertise of just about any adult who has lived through life's ups and downs and reflected on their meaning. In one of the seminar sessions, a secretary in a departmental office mentioned that students often come to work in her office as freshmen and keep working there until they graduate. It struck me that she is likely to have a greater influence on those students than any other adult they might meet in the university.

One of the important challenges, then, for those whose work is to heighten awareness of what is characteristically Ignatian about a Jesuit educational institution is to find ways of encouraging colleagues to recognize the role they play in fostering the human flourishing of the members of the university community and therefore in articulating and constructing the shared human good that can be said to be the goal of the university. From here, the challenge is to draw them to recognize that constructing the shared human good is how we embody and realize God's desire for us. We should not minimize the difficulty of this second challenge—because much in the culture resists it, yes, but also because we should

have a healthy fear of being glib about what is essentially a mystery, who God is, God's purposes, and the relationship of our lives to this mystery. This fear should encourage much “slow conversation,” to use another phrase from Lambert. Yet it is the nature of a mystery—in the theological sense—that it is a fertile idea that nourishes our spirits and makes us eager for the journey. The power of Ignatian spirituality is that it encourages us to trust the process and the journey.

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What Is Catholic Youth Ministry?



Robert J. McCarty, D.Min.

The next two articles are reprinted from Seminary Journal, Fall 2007, published by the National Catholic Educational Association (www.ncea.org).

The Catholic bishops of the United States defined Catholic youth ministry in the 1997 document *Renewing the Vision: A Framework for Catholic Youth Ministry* (RTV). This document, printed in both English and Spanish, provides a structure for the ministry as well as a language, theology, and pastoral approach for responding to the personal and spiritual needs of today's adolescents.

What is needed today is a church which knows how to respond to the expectations of young people. Jesus wants to enter into dialogue with them and, through his body, which is the church, to propose the possibility of a choice, which will require a commitment of their lives. As Jesus with the disciples of Emmaus, so the church must become the traveling companion of young people. (Pope John Paul II, World Youth Day 1995, Philippines)

The church must become the traveling companion of young people—and that is what we mean by youth ministry. If, indeed, “it takes an entire village to raise a child,” then it certainly takes an entire

church to journey with young people as they grapple with the Good News and respond in discipleship.

The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, in their 1997 document, *Renewing the Vision: A Framework for Catholic Youth Ministry*, identified three goals and eight components which provide direction for this ministry. Youth ministry, at its best, is characterized by the following five hallmarks:

- Discipleship
- Connection
- Giftedness and Growth
- Comprehensiveness
- Entire church (parish) involvement

GOAL 1: YOUTH MINISTRY ... IT'S ABOUT DISCIPLESHIP

The first goal of youth ministry is “to empower young people to live as disciples of Jesus Christ in our world today” (RTV 9). Young people are “searching for a noble adventure,” a compelling and challenging vision of life, and a cause worth their commitment. They hunger to hear the Good News that finds response in discipleship. As their companions on this spiritual journey, some of the ways the church fulfills this first goal of youth ministry is by:

- Proclaiming the Good News of Jesus through witness and word to young people.
- Enabling young people to live as disciples through their involvement in service, ministry, and leadership opportunities.
- Providing young people the faith skills for discipleship.

GOAL 2: YOUTH MINISTRY ... IT'S ABOUT CONNECTION

The second goal is “to draw young people to responsible participation in the life, mission, and work of the Catholic faith community” (RTV 11). Young people have a hunger for connection, to be in relationship, and to belong. Family, peers, school, youth-serving organizations and church are primary connections for young people. Some of the ways the church fulfills this second goal of youth ministry is by:

- Being a “youth friendly” community that welcomes young people, values their participation, and calls forth their gifts.
- Integrating young people into the liturgical, pastoral, and ministerial life of the parish community.
- Creating opportunities for young people to enter into healthy relationships of trust and respect with their

peers and with adults.

- Promoting Catholic identity and religious literacy through programs of adolescent catechesis.

GOAL 3: YOUTH MINISTRY ... IT'S ABOUT GIFTS AND GROWTH

The third goal of youth ministry is “to foster the total personal and spiritual growth of each young person” (RTV 15). Adolescence is an important time for mental, spiritual, social, and physical growth. Their experiences and relationships greatly influence their healthy and positive development. The church strives to surround young people with the best possible external scaffolds—networks of caring relationships of family, school, peers, and other adults—while young people are developing their internal psychological and spiritual backbone—their values, life skills, commitments, and moral compass. The church fulfills this third goal of youth ministry by:

- Enabling young people to develop a personal relationship with Jesus.
- Actively supporting positive youth development and fostering healthy values and life skills.
- Supporting families of young people by providing resources, programs, and services.
- Providing opportunities to experience and express caring, service, and compassion for others.

YOUTH MINISTRY IS COMPREHENSIVE

Youth ministry is more than programs and events. It is “the response of the Christian community to the needs of young people, and the sharing of the unique gifts of youth with the larger community” (“A Vision of Youth Ministry,” p. 6, quoted in RTV 1). To be most effective, this is a ministry to, with, by, and for young people that involves their families, their parish community, and the larger community. At the heart of ministry with young people is the presence of caring, supportive relationships where youth experience the Good News in the flesh.

EIGHT COMPONENTS OF YOUTH MINISTRY

A comprehensive approach to youth ministry utilizes the eight components identified in *Renewing the Vision* as a framework:

- Advocacy
- Catechesis
- Community Life
- Evangelization

Justice and Service
Leadership Development
Pastoral Care
Prayer and Worship.

These components guide our efforts in proclaiming the Good News, connecting young people with the faith community, and calling our young people to the challenge of discipleship.

"The Ministry of Advocacy engages the Church to examine its priorities and practices to determine how well young people are integrated into the life, mission, and work of the Catholic community and within society" (RTV, p. 27). The ministry of advocacy includes protecting the sanctity of human life, speaking with and on behalf of young people, empowering the voice of young people and developing partnerships in building a healthy community.

"The Ministry of Catechesis most effectively promotes the faith development of young and older adolescents when the curriculum is focused on important faith themes of the Church and on the developmental needs and life experiences of adolescents" (RTV, p. 30). It helps young people enrich and expand their understanding of the Scriptures and the sacred tradition. It provides a healthy future by encouraging youth to live faithfully in providing real life applications so that they may grow as disciples of Jesus Christ in their daily lives.

"The Ministry of Community Life builds an environment of love, support, appreciation for diversity and judicious acceptance that models Catholic principles; develops meaningful relationships; and nurtures Catholic faith" (RTV, p. 34). This includes healthy relationships between youth and caring adults.

"The Ministry of Evangelization shares the good news of the reign of God and invites young people to hear about the Word Made Flesh" (RTV, p. 36). Drawing from Jesus' example, evangelization involves the community's pronouncements and living witnesses of adults and young people that the reign of God is realized in and through Jesus. The ministry of evangelization incorporates several essential elements: witness, outreach, proclamation, invitation, conversion, and discipleship.

"The Ministry of Justice and Service nurtures in young people a social consciousness and a commitment to a life of justice and service rooted in their faith in Jesus Christ, in the Scriptures, and in Catholic social teaching; empowers young people to work for justice by concrete efforts to address the causes of human suffering; and infuses the concepts of justice, peace, and

human dignity into all ministry efforts" (RTV, p. 38).

"The Ministry of Leadership Development calls forth, affirms, and empowers the diverse gifts, talents and abilities of adults and young people in our faith communities" (RTV, p. 40).

"The Ministry of Pastoral Care is a compassionate presence in imitation of Jesus' care for people, especially those who are hurting and in need" (RTV, p. 42). It involves promoting positive adolescent and family development through a variety of positive (preventive) strategies, caring for adolescents and families in crisis through support, counseling, and referral to appropriate community agencies; providing guidance as young people face life decisions and make moral choices and challenging systems that are obstacles to positive development.

"The Ministry of Prayer and Worship celebrates and deepens young people's relationship with Jesus Christ through the bestowal of grace, communal prayer, and liturgical experiences; it awakens their awareness of the Spirit at work in their lives; it incorporates young people more fully in the sacramental life of the Church, especially Eucharist; it nurtures the personal prayer life of young people, and it fosters family rituals and prayer" (RTV, p. 44).

YOUTH MINISTRY TAKES AN ENTIRE CHURCH

This is what is needed: a Church for young people, which will know how to speak to their heart and enkindle, comfort, and inspire enthusiasm in it with the joy of the Gospel and the strength of the Eucharist; a Church which will know how to invite and welcome the person who seeks a purpose for which to commit his whole existence; a Church which is not afraid to require much, after having given much; which does not fear asking from young people the effort of a noble and authentic adventure, such as that of the following of the Gospel. (Pope John Paul II, 1995 World Day of Prayer for Vocations)



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Identifying the Essential Questions for Successful Ministry with Catholic Youth

Charlotte McCorquodale, Ph.D., and Leigh Sterten



Recent findings from the *National Study of Youth and Religion* (NSYR) reveal that the Catholic Church in the United States does not have effective answers to the important questions concerning the engagement of the majority of its youth in matters of faith. More so, the church may not be asking the correct strategic questions when considering the many critical issues identified by one of the most significant studies to date on youth and religion, conducted by Dr. Christian Smith. This paper suggests that the time is now for the Catholic Church to engage in reflective dialog and strategic action to improve not only the future of young Catholics but indeed the future of the whole church.

Instead of promoting a new paradigm, we must deconstruct the old paradigms and then propose a series of reflections on culture, the church, and the state of youth ministry as we begin the third millennium. (Jones, 2001, p. 12)

The gravity of the situation is captured by Dr. Smith in his book, *Soul Searching: The Religious and Spiritual Lives of American Teenagers*. He describes the immense potential the church has for engaging its youth and the great distance the church must travel to meet that potential.

The CYO paradigm, or youth group model, is considered outdated by many currently ministering to youth.

Getting from where the majority of U.S. Catholic teens currently are with regard to their religious faith and lives to achieving the huge potential that appears to exist for them would seem to require that the Church invest a great deal more attention, creativity and institutional resources into its young members—and therefore into its own life. Undeniably, the future shape of the U.S. Catholic Church virtually depends on it. (Smith & Denton, 2005)

Supporting Smith's conclusion, our analysis of Catholic youth, and their parents, found many similar areas of disconnect in which the reality and the potential were not concurrent. This disconnect was most evident between what the young people say or believe and what they do in practice. For example, the Catholic youth in the NSYR sample valued the importance of faith very highly, with 84% (11% extremely, 31% very, 42% somewhat) saying that religious faith is at least somewhat important in shaping daily life; however, less than half of those youth (39%) attend Mass on a weekly basis, which is considered a normative practice in the Roman Catholic Church. Many measures of Catholic identity, such as the intent to want to remain Catholic at the age of 25, were high (76%), yet active participation in various Catholic faith practices and programs were generally low. Additionally, 74% stated that they are either very or somewhat interested in learning about their religion, but only 21% participate weekly in religious education programs sponsored by parish communities, with 34% never having participated in these programs.

A related challenge to the one that Dr. Smith put forth in *Soul Searching* is presented by Tony Jones in *Postmodern Youth Ministry* (2001). Jones' challenge can be found in the opening quote of this paper and is directed to a broader group than Catholics, to include

all religious traditions. He explains the need to move beyond the search for a new paradigm and to do the hard work of deconstructing old paradigms and seriously reflecting on what it will take to engage the young church in the third millennium. As both practitioners and researchers in the field of Catholic youth ministry, the authors of this paper concur. Based upon the findings of the NSYR, there is a great need for serious reflection by the Catholic faith community.

The focus of this paper is to examine key elements of the current paradigm operating in the Catholic Church's approach to engaging, educating, and integrating Catholic young people into the life of the faith community. In order to facilitate the needed reflection on the "culture, the church, and the state of youth ministry," as Jones suggested, we propose a set of strategic questions. These questions should be utilized in the needed dialogue about the Catholic Church's efforts to improve in religiously engaging the majority of its young members.

DECONSTRUCTING THE OLD AND CURRENT PARADIGM IN ORDER TO RECONSTRUCT THE CURRENT AND FUTURE STRATEGIC QUESTIONS

Ministry directed toward youth as a specific population in the Roman Catholic Church in the United States, outside of the Catholic school setting, is less than 100 years old, and in the past has been commonly referred to as the Catholic Youth Organization or CYO (McCorquodale, 2001). The CYO paradigm, or youth group model, is considered outdated by many currently ministering to youth, especially by those who adhere to a paradigm based upon a comprehensive vision of ministry to youth; however, the CYO paradigm is still in many ways the operational paradigm within parish youth ministry.

In this model, successful youth ministry is to, with, by, and for young people, and looks primarily like gathered programs for age groupings of youth. Youth ministry efforts in the majority of dioceses and parishes across the country focus on the development of youth groups or groupings around gathered programs. These programs typically target young people only and increase the segregation of youth from the rest of the faith community, rather than integrating them into it. In order to illustrate this operative model, Kenda Creasy Dean and Ron Foster used a memorable image. "The youth group model—sometimes referred to as the 'one-eared Mickey Mouse' model of ministry—created an

environment in which youth, isolated in an 'ear' on top of Mickey's head, had only marginal contact with the rest of the body of Christ" (Dean & Foster, 1998, p. 30).

THE QUESTION IS NOT "WHAT IS OUR VISION FOR MINISTRY WITH YOUTH?" BUT "WHY HAS THE CLEARLY ARTICULATED VISION FOR MINISTRY WITH CATHOLIC YOUTH NOT BEEN REALIZED?"

The paradigm described above definitely flies in the face of the operative vision of youth ministry—in existence in the Catholic faith community for over 30 years—which advocates a comprehensive approach to ministry with youth (USCCB, 1997). The NSYR findings clearly indicate that the Catholic community is failing to live out their prescribed comprehensive vision with the majority of Catholic young people (McCorquodale, Sterten, & Shepp, 2004). In 1976, *A Vision for Youth Ministry*, published by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, outlined the need for the community to change its approach from programs with a limited focus, such as CYO or Confraternity of Christian Doctrine (CCD), into a more comprehensive approach that takes into account the multi-faceted needs of Catholic young people, based upon the changing realities of family, culture, and societal institutions such as schools, church parishes, and neighborhoods. The comprehensive vision was renewed and affirmed by the highest level of church leadership in 1997 with the approval by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) of *Renewing the Vision: A Framework for Catholic Youth Ministry* (RTV), the guiding document for Catholic youth ministry in the U.S.

The primary purpose of the NSYR was to describe the spiritual and religious lives of American youth, not to measure the effectiveness of various religious traditions' efforts to minister with youth. Even though the purpose was not to measure the effectiveness of comprehensive Catholic youth ministry as defined by RTV, the study did shed some light on the church's overall effectiveness—or lack thereof—in engaging the majority of Catholic young people. Overall, the findings of this study lead to the critical issue regarding how little of the vision has been realized.

Does this mean that the vision of comprehensive youth ministry is wrong? As Catholic youth ministry practitioners and leaders for over 25 years, just asking this question seems close to Catholic youth ministry heresy, yet the question bears asking in light of the facts

provided. If the goals for youth ministry that are identified in RTV are to be considered the measure of success regarding youth ministry, then the findings from the NSYR indicate that the Catholic Church in the U.S. is failing to reach the majority of Catholic young people.

Assuming the vision is not wrong and that it provides a sufficient target for the Catholic Church's ministry to youth, the next obvious question is: why has the vision not been realized; why have we missed the target? Part of the challenge may lie in the fact that the current vision seems to be operating in direct contrast to the old, yet current paradigm. An honest dialog about this issue must occur, not just among youth ministry leaders and bishops who have promulgated this vision and who are guided by it, but by the entire faith community. Specifically, one key area of reflection needs to occur on the aspect of the comprehensive vision that calls for the whole community to be engaged in ministry with Catholic youth.

THIS LEADS TO THE NEXT QUESTION, WHICH IS NOT, "HOW DO WE ENGAGE YOUTH," BUT, "HOW DO WE ENGAGE THEIR PARENTS AND OTHER ADULT CATHOLIC CHRISTIANS IN THE FAITH COMMUNITY?"

The guiding documents set forth by the Catholic Church are clear and consistent about the importance and centrality of the faith community in areas of faith formation, youth ministry, catechesis, and evangelization of children, adolescents, and adults. The past decade has seen important strides in increasing this essential role of the faith community through intergenerational and whole-community catechesis programs. The NSYR suggests that one facet of the challenge facing the church in engaging Catholic youth is the lack of effectiveness in engaging the *adult* community, especially the parents of Catholic youth. The reality is that young people, as well as adults, are not engaged in their faith, as shown in the data on Mass attendance and participation in other religious activities (McCorquodale et al., 2004). This critical conclusion of the NSYR researchers says that young people are both a "mirror" and a "barometer" of the religious and spiritual lives of the adult faith community.

American youth actually share much more in common with adults than they do not share, and most American youth faithfully mirror the aspirations, lifestyles, practices, and problems of the adult world into which they are social-

Youth who attend Mass more frequently are more likely to participate in youth groups, religious education, retreats, and other youth ministry programs.

ized.... adolescents may actually serve as a very accurate barometer of the condition of the culture and institutions of our larger society.... American teenagers actually well reflect back to us the best and worst of our own adult condition and culture (Smith & Denton, 2005, p. 191).

For many years, parents have been named and identified by the church as the primary religious educators and faith formators of their children. Recently, this has been reaffirmed with the publication of the *National Directory of Catechesis* (USCCB, 2005). While it is the current vision of Catholic youth ministry that the entire faith community is responsible for the transmission of faith (i.e., “it takes a whole village”) (USCCB, 1997), findings from this study point to the reality that this aspect of the renewed vision for Catholic youth ministry is based on the false premise that the majority of the adult community—especially parents—is engaged enough in their faith to pass it on to anyone.

Recent trends toward a model that integrates young people and all generations of Catholics into the life of the faith community (often referred to as Inter-generational or Whole Community Catechesis) have experienced some success, but this model is not operative in the majority of Catholic parishes. Data from this study indicate that a further exploration of these models is critical; however, the role of “youth only” programming in such models is neither understood nor implemented with consistency.

Complicating this issue are the findings by Dr. Smith that the presence of a youth group in a congregation, led by a full-time youth minister, significantly increases teen attendance at religious worship services, when their parents do not attend services (Smith & Denton, 2005). This increases the importance of age-segregated programming by congregations that provide human and financial resources, at least to the extent of

funding a full-time youth minister. Additionally, the findings regarding the Catholic population within the NSYR further complicate and highlight the dilemma regarding age-segregated programs. When Catholic young people are gathered through programs designed specifically for them, indicators of religiosity, such as frequency of prayer, participation in the sacraments, and positive attitudes toward God and religion do increase. This leads to the next question:

THE QUESTION IS NOT “HOW MANY RESOURCES ARE NEEDED TO MINISTER EFFECTIVELY TO YOUTH,” BUT RATHER, “WHAT PARADIGM SHIFTS ARE NEEDED TO REPOSITION THE PLACE THAT YOUNG PEOPLE HAVE IN THE LIFE AND COMMUNITY OF THE CHURCH?”

In the report published by the National Federation for Catholic Youth Ministry (McCorquodale et al., 2004), we concluded that in terms of Catholic youth who are engaged in their faith, “more equals more,” meaning that when Catholic youth participate in some youth programs, they are more likely to participate in others. Youth who attend Mass more frequently are more likely to participate in youth groups, religious education, retreats, and other youth ministry programs than youth who do not attend Mass, or who attend less frequently. Additionally, we found that young people who actively participate in youth groups, parish religious education, and/or attend a Catholic school engage in less at-risk behaviors. Based on this conclusion, it is obvious that age-segregated programs do have a role to play in the church’s overall effort to engage all of its youth; however, the degree or extent of that role is still unknown. This is especially true given the chilling fact that the majority of Catholic youth do not attend programs offered by the church for their age group only.

The resources (financial and human) currently being invested by the church into its younger members go primarily to these types of gathered programs and groupings (including Catholic schools). Dr. Smith concluded that more resources need to be allocated for ministry efforts aimed at engaging youth. As we examine our current paradigm regarding youth-only programming, the current allocation of resources (limited though they are) to that programming begs the question, “Is this the best use of them?” More important questions regarding resource allocation include “What would sufficient resourcing look like, in financial and human terms, in the church’s efforts to engage youth?” and “What will it take for the Catholic faith community to re-prioritize the

utilization of its resources?" Is the issue the need for more full-time paid youth ministry leaders, because we assume that employed leaders will increase the overall effectiveness of the youth ministry program?

Based upon the NSYR data, we do know that designating a youth ministry leader in a parish community, in and of itself, increases youth attendance at Mass, and is indicative of at least some level of support of the community for the task of engaging youth. It is important to note, although, that only the presence of a *full-time* paid youth ministry leader contributed significantly to increased attendance by young people whose parents do not attend. On the other hand, allocating resources only to paid personnel seems shortsighted as well. This issue of resource allocation cannot be viewed in isolation from achievement of the outcomes desired by the Catholic faith community regarding its young people. This leads to the next question.

THE QUESTION IS NOT "WHAT DO YOUTH NEED TO KNOW ABOUT THEIR FAITH AND WHY CAN'T THEY ARTICULATE IT," BUT "WHAT STRATEGIES ARE REQUIRED TO HELP CATHOLIC YOUTH UNDERSTAND THE RELEVANCE OF FAITH TO THEIR LIVES, RELATIONSHIPS, AND MORAL BELIEFS?"

It is not "How do we help young people make participation in the Catholic Church a priority in their lives," but "Why is the Catholic faith—as it has been transmitted—no longer relevant to the core aspects of their lives?"

The relevancy of faith to the lives of American teenagers is not just an issue for the Catholic Church; however the faith education of the young is one that the church has debated for a long time. Two issues consistently emerge in a discussion of adolescent catechesis: what should be taught and how it should be taught.

What they need to know regarding the content of the Catholic faith has been agreed upon (USCCB, 2005); *why they do not know it has not*. As a result of conducting face-to-face interviews with teens from the NSYR sample, Dr. Smith noted that while American youth in general are "incredibly inarticulate" about their faith, Catholic youth are "particularly inarticulate" regarding matters of faith (Smith & Denton, 2005). Speculation abounds about the reasons for this. Some of these factors already have been reflected upon in this paper, such as the need for a religiously articulate adult faith community, the importance of resource investment (financial and human) by the religious traditions whose young people are more articulate, and

We do know that designating a youth ministry leader in a parish community, in and of itself, increases youth attendance at Mass.

the benefit of integrating young people and catechesis into primary religious activities, such as worship.

A deeper look at the issue reveals a more troubling reality; while Catholic young people value their faith and identify with it, there is a large gap between what they say is valuable and how they live out that value. The NSYR found that faith and religion operate in the background of young people's lives (much like furniture) and that there is often a lack of relevance of this faith to their daily activities and decisions (Smith & Denton, 2005).

According to Smith and Denton, "Catholic youth move relatively further toward pluralistic and individualistic approaches to faith" (2005, p. 76). Data support this conclusion; 54% of Catholic youth say it is okay to pick and choose religious beliefs without having to accept the teachings of the faith as a whole, and 67% do not agree that in order to be truly religious and spiritual, believers need to be involved in a religious congregation (McCorquodale et al., 2004).

Often, the question is "How can we foster Catholic identity in young people?" But is fostering identity the critical question for reflection? If identity is measured by the intent to continue being Catholic, then it is not a question of identity. Seventy-six percent of Catholic youth indicated their intent to attend a Catholic Church as adults and 83% stated that they definitely or maybe plan to attend Mass at the age of 25 (McCorquodale et al., 2004).

Rather than an issue about identity, it might better be described as an issue of the lack of understanding, by Catholic teens and adults, of what it means to be Catholic. One example of this is revealed in the response by the majority of Catholic youth saying that it is not necessary to attend Mass or be active in their parish life in order to be Catholic. An important finding in *Soul Searching* describes what Dr. Smith concludes is the operative religion in the United States, Moralistic

Therapeutic Deism (MTD) (Smith & Denton, 2005). It would appear that many of the core aspects of MTD have been integrated into Catholic young people's understanding of their religion. In other words, Catholic young people may be identifying with an incorrect understanding of what it means to be Catholic.

The challenge of considering this possibility of a lack of understanding of what it means to be Catholic is how to respond. The logical conclusion may be that they are being taught the wrong thing, but the NSYR data point to the reality that the majority of Catholic youth do not attend weekly Mass, do not participate in formal religious education or faith formation programs, and their parents are falling short in their role of teaching the faith because they lack the necessary understanding.

IN CONCLUSION, THE QUESTION IS NOT "HOW DO WE CHANGE YOUNG PEOPLE," BUT "HOW DO WE NEED TO CHANGE AS CATHOLIC ADULT CHRISTIANS AND LEADERS IN OUR EFFORTS TO ENGAGE CATHOLIC YOUNG PEOPLE?"

In order to answer the change question, it is critical that church leaders ask "What is, or should be, our target—our goal—regarding the measure of a successful strategy for increasing the engagement of Catholic

youth in the life and faith of the Catholic Church?"

Unfortunately, the NSYR does not tell us conclusively what the measure of success is, but it does identify clearly the results of failing to engage young people in faith activities. "Incredibly inarticulate" is not a measure of success. One-third of Catholic youth attending Mass at least weekly is not a measure of success. Neither is a relativistic, individualistic definition of Catholic identity.

Renewing the Vision: A Framework for Catholic Youth Ministry (1997) set forth a much more positive approach to establishing goals for the Catholic Church's ministry to youth; however, the challenge is that such a hopeful, and some would say idealistic, vision does not establish a clear enough line of demarcation between success and failure, or even a less drastic measure, such as progress.

The NSYR points clearly to the need for measurable goals in the church's ministry with youth. Whether the church will embrace the need for setting such measures of success (or even failure) is a critical issue. What will success or progress look like in the next five or ten years—or better yet—for the next generation of Catholic youth?

- Will it be an increase of 25% in measures of religiosity, which is more in line with the Mormon or conservative

EXHIBIT 1: STRATEGIC QUESTIONS FOR DIALOG BY PARISHES, DIOCESES, AND NATIONAL CHURCH AGENCIES:

- How can parents and other adult Catholics within the faith community be engaged in their faith to the extent that they are willing and able to pass it on or share it with Catholic young people?
- The need for new models is supported by recent trends towards Inter-generational or Whole Community Catechesis approaches. How can ministry to youth be integrated into these models effectively? What is the role of youth ministry in the midst of such an effort?
- How can or do age-segregated programs support or deter the effort to engage Catholic youth?
- How will the leadership of the Catholic Church communicate to the Catholic faith community the findings of the NSYR regarding the community's importance in fostering the faith of the young?
- To what degree has a comprehensive vision of youth ministry been adopted by Catholic parishes and schools? Is the current vision still valid? What role does a comprehensive vision of youth ministry play in discussing the critical issues?
- What strategies are needed to engage a genuine dialog on changes faith communities need to make to better foster faith in the young?
- How can young people who have been religiously engaged by the Catholic faith community contribute to and be part of the effort to engage other youth? How will this be fostered beyond current youth leadership programs?
- Is hiring a full-time youth ministry leader the best strategy for investing human and financial resources into our ministry efforts regarding young Catholics?
- What should the target be regarding the church's measure of success in engaging Catholic young people religiously and spiritually?

- Protestant religious traditions, which have the highest percentage of religiously devoted teenagers?
- Will our goal be to reach 25%, 50%, or 100% of Catholic youth within a parish community?
 - Will it be measured by the number of Catholic youth of this generation who remain or become active in their faith as adults?

The first step in developing important measures such as these must be *strategic dialog among key stakeholders*. If the NSYR study has told Catholic leaders anything, it is that parents should be at the center of such a dialog, as well as the leaders in our community who have responsibility for resource allocation. As the heads of the local church, bishops should be guiding this dialog, as well as ensuring that the shared wisdom of youth ministry leaders is included. The dialog should be guided by the current vision of youth ministry but not limited to it. The vision can provide a rudder that guides the dialog. Strategic questions that could provide a starting point for this dialogue can be found in Exhibit 1.

Additionally, the dialogue should include both a thorough review of the findings of the NSYR and a clear examination of the church's present paradigm regarding ministry to youth, especially adolescent catechesis. The NSYR has assisted the Catholic faith community in quantifying and humanizing realities that we have known to be operative. Before this groundbreaking research, church leadership had only hunches, intuition, assumptions, and individual interpretation to rely on in measuring the Catholic Church's effectiveness in its ministry to, by, for, and with young people. The church now has reliable research that confirms many of the hunches, but also challenges many of our assumptions. Most of all, the NSYR research leaves us with many unanswered questions. The time is now for the Catholic Church to engage in this effort of reflective dialog and strategic action that affects not only the future of young Catholics but indeed the future of the whole church.

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Reducing the Price Tag

SCRUPLES

scrupulus: sharp pebble in your shoe

scruple's a second thought
if what I feel hellbent to do
is actually what I ought

no scruple no impediment
to wading into a dank slough
then mucking up the continent

and yet three thoughts or four
about what hardly merits two
is good sense going out the door

you say the saints are scrupulous
so anxious to give God what's due
i'd say meticulous

"be perfect!" does that mean compelled
into exactitude on the ego's cue
or by great love impelled?

fear of the Lord is wisdom's start
but sometimes not, so be you
free for the Lord, my mind and heart

blessed the lone pilgrim who
of scruples has just one or two

My poem "Scruples" and these prose reflections stem from a chance remark at a Jesuit weekend supper. Someone quipped, but with serious intent, "I'm not a great fan of the saints. They were all scrupulous." Alas, James Martin, author of *My Life with the Saints*, was not there to defend them against this *outré* remark. As a veteran of the malady in question, though, I was then left to ponder whether there might be anything to it.

The saints are paradigms of the tender conscience. Day in day out, they embody what Saint Ignatius, in the

Spiritual Exercises, refers to as "The Second Way of Being Humble": "Neither for all creation nor to save my life would I ever reach a decision to commit a venial sin." We have to remember that Ignatius, in the early years of his conversion, was hounded by the Inquisition for daring, as a layman, to explain the difference between mortal and venial sin. The inability to discern this difference still mars the peace of many conscientious people, who are prone, as the Church has been prone in the past, to find mortal sins—soul-deadening faults—everywhere.

Ignatius, who had very high standards of religious perfection, had come to some clarity of conscience only after his spiritual boot camp in Manresa, where he was driven nearly to suicide by his scruples. A scruple blurs and confuses the admittedly rough distinctions of moral theology—grave sin, venial sin and imperfection (lesser generosity, as with the young rich man in the gospel). Scrupulosity clouds common sense. It provokes continual anxiety. It takes the savor out of doing good. In short, it hamstring human freedom.

Freedom of choice is the most precious of human qualities. It is the distinguishing mark of being human. The witty and insightful Polish poet, Wislawa Szymborska, has a poem entitled, "In Praise of Self-Deprecation" (translators Magnus Kryniski and Robert Maguire in *A Book of Luminous Things*, editor Czeslaw Milosz). She reminds us that animals live with a totally clear conscience, and she asks, in effect, do we really want to live that way?

The buzzard has nothing to fault himself with.

Scruples are alien to the black panther.

Piranhas do not doubt the rightness of their actions.

The rattlesnake approves of himself without reservations.

.....

The killer-whale's heart weighs one hundred kilos

But in other respects it is light.

Anxiety, uncertainty, assessment and reassessment, to say nothing of guilt and even remorse, are the occasional price tags for the gift of free choice. We do not always manage these reactions well. Not everyone, of course, is so plagued. There are people enough acting with a kind of sovereign assurance who brush aside the movements of

self-doubt. On the Myers-Briggs scale, they are the extreme "Js," the ones who speak in pronouncements. However liberatable the topic at hand, they manage to imply, "It's my opinion, and it's the truth."

True freedom is an uphill pull, as Dante Alighieri managed to convey in the middle part of his *Divine Comedy*, "Purgatory." Only at the top of this "the seven storey mountain," as Thomas Merton called it, when the pilgrim had finished expiating the capital sins, was he made sovereign—"crowned and mitred"—over his own free will.

The Catholic church, with its long tradition of moral norms and spiritual guidance, has always encouraged self-examination and has fostered confession of sins. Nothing can be more liberating to the burdened conscience than to come to this sacrament, make a clean breast of it, with trust in God's mercy, and receive pardon from the Good Shepherd. This sacrament is a tremendous gift to the human family, weighed down by its inheritance from the old Adam.

Frequent confession has been a spur to holiness in the Church. In my family we have a pocket calendar of my father's for the year 1917, where almost every Saturday has the simple entry, "Confession." He had an earnest interior life, instinctive kindness and a keen sense of integrity, but with some admixture of anxiety too. That is the catch. In the bible, the psalms and the wisdom books like to insist that fear of the Lord—whether a loving reverence or a hard rap on the knuckles—is the beginning of wisdom. It is possible to get this fear a little wrong—or even very wrong.

Feodor Dostoyevsky, in the "Grand Inquisitor" section of *Brothers Karamazov*, has the brother Ivan argue at length that most people, sensing the pain of individual choice, prefer to let somebody else, i.e., the Church, guide them like sheep. There is something specious but also something undeniable in Ivan's argument.

Biographers and commentators on the heroic and outspoken Bishop Oscar Arnulfo Romero of El Salvador tell how often and faithfully he went to confession. I have heard even daily, although James Brockman, S.J., his biographer, does not so indicate. The very idea of daily confession makes me wince, but that is because it would not be sanely managed by me. Romero did mention, in his last retreat notes, the observation of his regular confessor, Father Secundo Azcue, S.J., "that there might be a tendency toward scrupulousness in regard to the confessions and that the principal matter was my interior dispositions" (*Romero, A Life*, p. 233). Here is a tremendously mature servant of God, amidst daily crises, and, if meticulous, then God was purifying him.

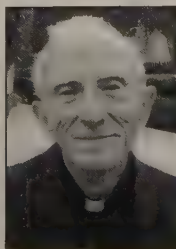
What scruples did in another day and age was to

focus so much on execution of detail as to lose sight of the big picture, which is love and service of God. With scrupulosity, a species of perfectionism kicks in, a compulsive observation of the self. In the old days of the strict communion fast, the precept not to eat anything between midnight and the communion time of Mass operated sometimes to bedevil people. So did the strictures against "bad thoughts." They fed scrupulosity.

There was and is a set of remedies against scruples in its Catholic version, that obsessive and desperate recourse to confession so as to relieve, if momentarily, the mental torment. How terribly distressing it is for a confessor to come upon people in the grips of such a compulsion. They seem impervious to sanity. Certain guidelines are, however, available: Confess only at set intervals—every two weeks, or better, every month. Stay with one confessor. (To break that rule is fatal.) No rehashing the past. Focus in your prayer on the incarnate goodness and kindness of God. When you sense a scruple operating, take the opposite tack, act contrary to it. Your return to freedom may depend on that.

To those who ran this gauntlet of unfreedom before the Second Vatican Council, the Council itself, and the emphasis at that time on a theology of the resurrection, was a genuine liberation. One could at last breathe. The addiction could not just be whisked away; no real addiction can. But there was a light after darkness. If the doubters of Vatican Council II need any reminders of its beneficence, here is a glaring one.

Scruples seem to be rare today, though spiritual directors need be ever alert to this tendency and to address it. Much spiritual energy can otherwise be wasted on pickiness. But there is a new element at play, the strong resurgence of old-time Catholicism. This movement, crystallizing around the Tridentine Mass, has the merit of retrieving some good old practices and treasures. However, it is very forcefully directive and puts such an emphasis on detail of practice and worship that it can open the old Pandora's box of scrupulosity again. This conjecture may be alarmist, but it is not out of place dearly to hope that the sincere and devout Catholic hearts of today be also mature, and spared this affliction of the ceaseless irritant.



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For Christian Counselors in Public Schools



Cecilia Raine Huckestein, Ph.D.

In recent years, there has been a paradigm shift in psychology away from behaviorism toward cognitive psychology. Along with this shift came a groundswell of research in the psychology of religion.

Presently, the study of religious belief has developed into its own “cell” in the American Psychological Association, and the research has been profoundly positive in terms of empirical relationships between strong Christian religious constructs and psychological health. How to account for this interest in religious belief? More to the point, how did this interest come to develop on the heels of the burgeoning current cognitive perspective? And finally, what are the implications embedded in this research, for public school counselors, who may be Christians themselves? A brief examination of cognitive psychology is a good place to start.

COGNITIVE PSYCHOLOGY

Cognitive psychology moved psychology away from the study of human behavior and its conditioning connections with the environment to the study of mental functions, belief systems, and personal meanings.

This was a positive move, since it expanded our psychological horizons.

While the previous paradigm, “behaviorism,” contributed much to the upbringing of younger children in the effort to teach them efficacious behavior, it left much to be desired in understanding the behavior of both older children and adults. The reason: we now know

that more than the "environment" shapes us. We have new information about our minds and how they work. We have new information about genetic components and about values and belief systems, and their offspring, evolution and choice, now called "human agency."

Because a window opened to individual belief systems, spiritual belief systems as a tool in the search for meaning achieved growing acceptance. Psychology began to revisit the work of William James, Carl Jung, Alfred Adler, Abraham Maslow, Carl Rogers, and Gordon Allport, all of whom believed that an individual's religious belief is so tightly woven into the fabric of experience that it cannot be separated. Religions, as juridical faith traditions, are networks of information that accord their members the knowledge and means for living a life of purpose, resolve, and intention. Religious beliefs are also often emotionalized and internalized assumptions that shape how people interpret their life-experience. Christian belief systems particularly have since been systematically studied as the unobservable, underlying factor that helps explain countless observable behaviors.

FINDINGS OF RESEARCH ON CHRISTIANITY

What does the research in the psychology of religion tell us about Christians? While the scope of this research is too broad to treat robustly here, we can nonetheless examine some of its important empirical findings. The following are findings in various peer-reviewed journals, where scientific data and concepts were used to address religious issues and demonstrate relationships between religious phenomena and behaviors and outcomes.

- Christianity benefits health because it promotes a stable meaning system and positive emotions such as hope, love, and forgiveness (Ellison & Levin, 1998).
- Christianity promotes the virtues of forgiveness, love, hope, humility, self-control, wisdom (Baumeister, 2002).
- Christians strive toward the mastery of envy, anger and pride (Schimmel, 1997).
- Christians have higher levels of emotional control and higher levels of emphases on calming the passions and developing emotional quietude (Allan, 1997).
- Christians are more likely to cope effectively with stress, and see it as less threatening because of their belief that the world is meaningful, predictable, and

manageable (Antonovsky, 1967).

- Intrinsic Christianity is associated with significantly lower levels of depression and anxiety (Plante & Boaccini, 1997).
- Christian existential certainty is associated with psychological well-being, whereas religious doubt is associated with higher levels of psychological stress (Krause, Ingersall-Dayton, et al., 1998).
- After controlling for socio-economic, gender and ethnicity factors, Christian public school students were found to have higher GPA's than their non-believing counterparts—3.33 vs. 2.86 (Deborah Mi Oh, 1999).
- Christians are less likely to commit suicide (Abbotts, et al., 2004); contract AIDS (Lotofo, et al., 2004); divorce (Bollinger, et al., 2003); use drugs (Yarhaus et al., 2003); become alcoholics (Williams, 2003), and seek revenge (Clinton, 2003).
- In various studies by Ellis (2000), Christians were found to be more capable of higher states of consciousness, intellectual power and choosing to use reason; a greater sense of purpose in life and responsibility to oneself and others, and courage to face the world and its problems.

In short: therapists try to help their clients achieve these desirable traits associated with being Christian.

IMPLICATIONS FOR TEACHERS

From the findings above, two areas of implication become readily apparent: the classroom and the counselor's office. While overt religiosity has been evicted from the American public school classroom in favor of what is thought to be a more equitable neutrality, educators and counselors alike can work in cooperation with religious belief as a supporting factor that may improve both personal and educational outcomes because of its motivating nature. The religious impulse gives rise to many enduring values, and teachers especially can encourage students to get in touch with their deepest moral values; to question themselves regarding transcendent issues such as how to lead a good life and what it means to be a moral person. They need also to develop the idea of a transcendent pedagogy which recognizes that faith and reason do not necessarily have to be dichotomized; that spirituality is another way of knowing and constructing knowledge and can contribute to effective cognitive functioning. The classroom offers an opportunity for teachers to help their students see themselves in relation to something larger and beyond their immediate experience.

Foremost is the belief that there is a loving divinity who is in control of their lives

IMPLICATIONS FOR SCHOOL COUNSELORS

Implications also arise concerning school counselors, as they begin to recognize that religions propose a variety of beliefs and practices that students of faith can call on to cope with their problems and that they provide a plethora of cognitive and behavioral motivational resources to counter life's social, emotional, and mental stresses.

Foremost is the belief that there is a loving divinity who is in control of their lives and that they can have confidence in themselves because of the inherent worth and dignity that comes from being made in God's image.

Secondly, they can be reminded that this eternal divinity has endowed them with free will and the idea of what psychology calls human agency, a term that stands in part for what used to be called volition or free will. The idea is that they are agents of their own destinies and free to make choices.

Thirdly, they can be encouraged to recall that God gives them a variety of regulatory supports in their emotional life: prayer, meditation, forgiveness, reconciliation, repentance, worship, penitential rituals—all of which serve the purpose of mental and emotional refreshment and healing.

Finally, they can be reminded of the constancy of the bigger picture. The larger goal and the effort to achieve it are strengthened by persistence in achieving smaller goals, both personal, interpersonal and academic.

QUESTIONS OF U.S. LAW

The above recommendations are situationally complex however, and further dialogue across educational as well as political boundaries is needed. Apart from the issue of parental rights, specifically those that entail the religious life of their children, there is also the constitutional question. John Whitehead, a renowned attorney in constitutional law, writes that

many educational professionals are misinformed about issues of religion, and that excluding religion alone from student expression in public schools is an unconstitutional hostility or non-neutrality toward religion in contravention of the Free Exercise Clause. He cites the Supreme Court's ruling that there is a crucial difference between government speech endorsing religion, which the Establishment Clause forbids, and *private* speech endorsing religion, which the Free Speech and Free Exercise Clause *protect* (Whitehead, 1991). The line is often fine, and professionals need to reflect upon where, if and how religious perspectives can be integrated into the fabric of public school environments. There has been much theorizing concerning multicultural students especially, who often feel muted and reduced when their religious home cultures are devalued or ignored, and that spiritually-based concepts are core elements of racial, ethnic, and national identities.

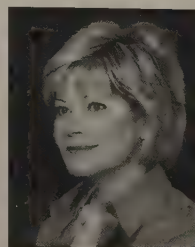
CONCLUSION

What all this means is that new paradigms are being sketched out, and new frameworks are emerging in which it is possible to nuance the spiritual dimension in students' lives as part of honoring them as subjects and authors of their own quest for learning and psychological health. The values and principles inherent in their faith traditions may offer support that would buttress both pedagogical and psychological models currently in practice in classrooms and counselors' offices. The reminders and recommendations cited above offer a good place to start.

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Whitehead, J. *The Rights of Religious Persons in Public Schools*. Wheaton, Illinois: Crossway Books, 1991.

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The Spirit of Discipleship

Patrick Sean Moffett, C.F.C.



When they were sent out two by two (Luke 10:1), the disciples were well into their course of formation. For some disciples, others pointed Jesus out to them (John 1:35, 41); others were found by Jesus (John 1:43). They met the teacher and soon found themselves counted among his followers. He assured them: “I chose you” (John 15:19). Each had been sought, found, held and carried. Day after day they witnessed words and actions that now constitute their own mission. He tells them, “Freely have you received; give with the same generosity.”

They return from the brief period of field work to an ever more intensive preparation. They are to move the mission to the “ends of the earth” (Matthew 28:19; Acts 1:8).

Jesus announces to the disciples that the Spirit will guide the continuing work of this school of formation. They and their successors will experience the powerful presence of the Spirit in their midst. Successive generations of disciples will know that they too have been chosen and will be sent to carry forward the mission.

As successors of the twelve and the seventy-two, we examine our lives to trace the words and actions that

have prepared each of us for a unique personal ministry today among God’s People, our brothers and sisters. Individual reflection provides considerable material, but it is only in a “here and now” exchange with other disciples that we come to an understanding of what the Lord is doing among us.

This article employs a model of belonging as a context for re-visioning the methodology of Jesus in the formation of his disciples, then and now.

FORMATIVE RELATIONSHIPS

The accounts of the post-resurrection appearances of Jesus describe a series of personal encounters with one, two, eleven, and more disciples. Each reveals the intensity of a relationship. Mary’s name alerts her to his presence (John 20:16). Cleopas and the unnamed disciple on the way to Emmaus are fully engaged (Luke 24:32). Their hearts are burning. And yet, it is only in the breaking of the bread that they recognize their guest as Jesus. In a subsequent gathering Jesus discerns their persistent doubt. He asks for food. He wants them to know that he is real, and really present.

It is in the recall and sharing of personal encounters with the Lord that the disciples of yesterday and today trace the formative touch of the Spirit in their lives.

Thomas misses the appearance. He sets the terms of believing—touching, putting his finger into the wound. Jesus offers the requested proof. Thomas proclaims Jesus as his personal Lord and God (John 20:28).

With each appearance the disciples are engaged in the concluding phase of their formation. Jesus chooses moments they are together. He confirms that they are bonded to each other with a single mission. They belong with each other. He is in their midst, as he always will be (Matthew 28:18-20).

It is in the recall and sharing of personal encounters with the Lord that the disciples of yesterday and today trace the formative touch of the Spirit in their lives.

PSYCHOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVES ON THE “HERE AND NOW”

Family of origin, significant others, education, culture, crises, conquests, times of bonding, of separation, of closure and of new beginnings, all help define the path to the here and now. Sigmund Freud and his followers tapped some of the wisdom of the psalms. “You knit me in my mother’s womb” (Psalm 139:13).

When psychoanalysis seemed to be fixated on what had been, Gordon Allport admonished his fellow psychologists: while psychology is tracing behavior into the past, persons are actively living their lives into the future. His observations helped pave the route to what is now labeled “positive psychology” with an emphasis on proactive motivational factors, effective interventions, an exchange of best practices, and goal-directed engagements in the pursuit of happiness and wisdom.

Examining the past and projecting into the future are certainly actions in the here and now. Gestalt psychologist Kurt Lewin provided a useful paradigm when he noted that the psychological past and the psychological future are dynamic elements of the present life-space. How I perceive what has been and what I anticipate of

the future influence my thoughts, feelings and action tendencies in the present moment.

Much of contemporary psychotherapy, both individual and group, repeatedly calls attention to what is happening in the *here and now* between and among the agents of the psychotherapeutic engagement. Therapist Irvin Yalom notes: “I never let an hour go by without checking into our relationship...*How are you and I doing today?*”

So too, the formation of the disciple involves tapping into evolving experiences of identity and belonging. The disciple asks: Who have I become? To and with whom do I belong? Where is the Spirit leading me, us, now?

GOSPEL PARALLELS, GOOD TIMING AND “AH-HA” EXPERIENCES

A re-visiting of our life-to-date formation is an opportunity to read the past as a Spirit-directed path to today pointing beyond to what is yet to come.

As always, the Jesus stories of the gospels lead the way. In retreats and workshops, groups of educators, parents, healthcare professionals and spiritual directors easily identify in the interactions of Jesus and his disciples strategies of formation that have clear applications in the lives of their students or clients as well as their own professional development.

The questions Jesus asks, the challenges he proposes, the example he sets, his responses and his non-responses reveal to discerning observers a plan for nurturing the growth and development of those selected to carry on the mission as disciples, teachers, healers, advocates, miracle workers and heirs of the kingdom of God.

The disciples were not passive recipients of an obliging grace, nor are we. They question, doubt, delight, flee, embrace, deny, beg, chide, mourn and repent. When asked if they too will go away, Peter answers for his fellow students: “Where shall we go? We know that you have the words of eternal life” (John 6:68).

Questions of how we got here yield to a fuller examination of where we are. What is this *here*? What is this *now*?

Once Peter tried to capture and contain the moment of illumination: “Let us set up three tents” (Luke 9:33). Jesus had other plans. Going down the mountain, he urged the disciples to hold the vision for another day (Matthew 17:9). This was not the hour.

Timing is one of the mysteries of the Spirit. At the appointed time the Spirit will come. We know neither the day nor the hour. We seek signs in the thunder and

the brilliant flashes of the storms that shake our lives. At such times the Lord's presence may not be felt. Then a small cloud and a gentle breeze suddenly reveal that here and now we are standing on holy ground (see 1 Kings 19:11-13). Obediently we take off our shoes—feet unshod feel the soil where dying seeds find new life.

Jesus links his departure to the coming of the Spirit. "The Advocate, the holy Spirit that the Father will send in my name—he will teach you everything and remind you of all that I told you" (John 14:26). The cycles of human recall manifest the drift from present consciousness to past learning. Teachers urge students to think back to the earlier lessons concerning structure, organization, progression, processes and sequence. They encourage the application of previous learning to new data with the hope of evoking the "Ah-ha" of discovery, insight, and illumination.

VERBS OF THE SPIRIT

Our introduction to the Spirit begins with words. We are baptized in the name of the Holy Spirit. Descriptions of the actions of the Spirit shape our understanding of the role of the Spirit in our lives. Images and expectancies emerge from the translations of the gospels we heard as children, the prayers we offered, the catechisms we memorized and the hymns we sang.

The scriptures as well as the commentators, homilists, and poets of each generation provide a rich lexicon that invites yet defies classification. Any efforts at organizing the movements of the Spirit are destined to fail. The Spirit will not be contained. At the same time we struggle to sort and group our experiences for purposes of understanding and recall.

Interviewers attend to verbs as a key to understanding the perception and attribution of movement, direction, and purpose. Disciples recalling the beginning stages of their formation will note the actions attributed to the Holy Spirit: The Spirit *breathes life, fills hearts, enlightens minds, sheds light, enkindles, guides, strengthens, urges, and renews the face of the earth.*

For purposes of this article, I will assign verbs attributed to the Spirit to one of four categories. The categories are suggested by a model of successive stages of belonging.

An extended career as a psychologist working in areas of formation, organizational analysis, and group counseling with a particular focus on intentional communities required a monitoring of the progress of individuals in developing a sense of group belonging. The

common elements of this process of incorporation became consolidated and reported as four stages of belonging, synthetically described as acceptance, involvement, engagement and proprietorship.

VERBS OF ACCEPTANCE

The initial stage of group belonging is the transition from outsider to insider as perceived by the individual entering the group. Those who are already members extend a hand of welcome, offering a variety of signs that the individual, while not fully incorporated, is certainly no longer to be perceived as an outsider and is being encouraged to make herself/himself at home.

The Spirit comes from the heavens gently or in wind and thunder. The Spirit overshadows, adopts, raises from death, washes away sins, heals wounds, gives life, defends, unites and reveals to the Christian the glory of Christ, giving birth to the Church.

VERBS OF INVOLVEMENT

Attentive to the behavior of the others, the new member begins to do what the members of the group do, imitating their actions, words, style of interaction and rhythm of life.

The Spirit fosters a spirit of adoption, rules, guides, and preserves from evil, teaches all things, pervades the universe, breathes fire and love, makes the divine voice heard, comes in the aid of our weaknesses, and leads to the source of eternal love.

VERBS OF ENGAGEMENT

In time, actions of the group become more natural to the member, the sense of participation yields to one of engagement. The individual reflects: it is good for me to be involved fully in these actions, to make my own the projects, thoughts and feelings that animate the group.

The Spirit recalls, knows every word, enlightens, fills, enflames, radiates, heals, awakens, and lights the fire of love. From within the individual, the Spirit cries "Abba Father," gives the gift of prophesy, intercedes for the believer according to the designs of God. The Spirit examines hearts and knows their desires. The Spirit builds the Church, uniting all, giving life to the whole body. The Spirit moves voices and souls to an accord of peace and is the font of every profound good. The Spirit recreates, operating in creatures the will of the Creator, renewing the face of the earth.

VERBS OF PROPRIETORSHIP

Fully engaged in the life of the group, the member comes to a sense of ownership: It is my group, or better, our group. What anyone says concerning the group is somehow directed toward me. The growth of the group, the formation of new members and their behavior, its reputation, its successes and its failures, all touch me deeply. My own needs with respect to generativity and self-actualization are intimately invested in the life of the group and fulfillment of its vision.

The Spirit configures the Church to Christ that it may become the soul of the world. The Spirit brings together the peoples to proclaim the glory of God. Indwelling, the Spirit nurtures the hope of freedom in all creation, enlightens the Church with eternal wisdom, transforming the members into the first fruits of the new creation. Making its home among men and women, the Spirit unites all in body and soul, giving perennial agreement and perfect joy. All are filled with the Spirit. The Spirit takes up its rest. The spirited claim: The Lord has done great things for me, for us. Holy is the Name of our God.

INTENTIONAL SUBMISSION

“...the Spirit annuls the distances, eliminates the discords and transforms the consensus of the peoples in first fruits to offer to God” (Irenaeus–Pentecost Office of Readings).

A poem, a text, a homily, a hymn, a basilica, a statue, a painting, a garden, a child, a smile—each comes through us to renew the face of the earth.

Carol Houselander’s reflection on Mary as the *Reed of God* extends to everyone moved by the Spirit. Moving through hollowed, hallowed chambers, inspiration creates music. The culmination of human agency becomes intentional submission to the action of the Spirit. In moments of surrender, the thoughts, words and deeds of the disciples are transformed into the substance of the Kingdom. As time between these transformations extends beyond human patience, the Spirit reminds the disciples of their walks with Jesus and of his parting words: “Behold, I am sending you the promise of my Father, but stay in the city until you are given power from on high” (Luke 24:49).

GROWTH AS A “WE”

Guided by the Spirit, Christ entrusted to the disciples the mission of the Church. The disciple of a new

day reflects: The Spirit has brought me to the Church and the Church to me. Its graces are my joy. The Church has touched me in the believers who welcome me, in the sacraments that initiated and confirmed my membership, in schools, parishes and confraternities I learned that I hold this faith in an ever expanding and intensifying communion of fellow members. I am bonded with those who preceded me in the faith, those who share it today and those who will embrace and be embraced by it in the future and for all eternity.

Erik Erickson in his own later years considered maturation as marked by increased identification with the “we” of one’s life.

The Spirit, in building the Church, invites each disciple in four movements to an ever more profound experience of belonging. Accepted, the disciple learns to participate. Participation yields to engagement in a way that is life-giving. The disciple comes to identify the communion of peoples as “my” Church and concludes, “We are the Church.”

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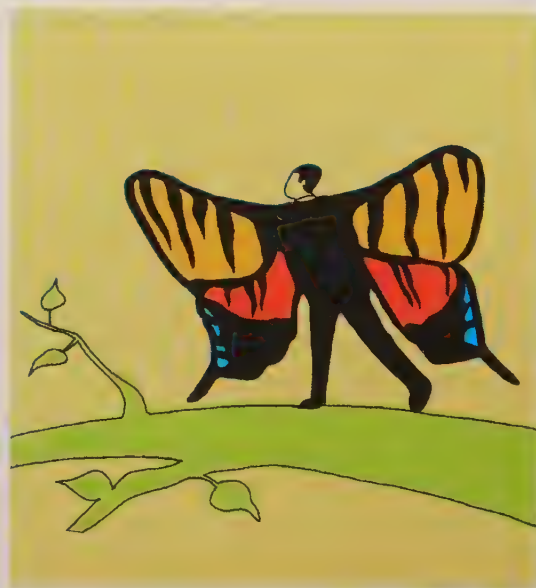
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BEHOLD, I AM MAKING ALL THINGS NEW

George Wilson, S.J.



In a sense, it's unfortunate what has happened to the word "renewal" since the Second Vatican Council. We need to remind ourselves first that it is a word we rarely heard before that time. It took the council to make us realize that a church which should have been on pilgrimage, constantly being converted and purified, had settled down. When the council prodded the church to take up the pilgrimage once again, we began to talk of "renewal." Unfortunately we frequently identified renewal with a set of relatively external changes: adopting the vernacular in the liturgy; eliminating outmoded practices and forms; introducing new structures, such as parish councils and the like. We began to call particular programs "renewals": parish renewals, marriage renewals, prayer renewals. This process reached its logical conclusion when we heard people say things like: "our parish has been through the renewal" or "isn't your marriage renewed?"

Now please don't misunderstand me. All of these efforts were good. They had the potential for injecting new life into our people. Many Catholics have grown enormously through them. My point is simply that they were all means, more or less effective, to a much more demanding end. And it is that end which we must constantly hold before us. To understand that end we must plumb the very depths of our God and the perfect revelation of our God, Jesus of Nazareth.

As we receive the revelation of God through our scriptures and the living experience of our people down through history, we are confronted by a paradox. Our God is revealed as one whose tender mercy is without measure—and one whose jealousy will brook no sharing of our love. God leads the people out of exile with infinite tenderness—and then rebukes them furiously when they do not destroy the enemies who stood in the way. The same God who frees the people from slavery seduces them into the desert where the journey is so painful that they are led to murmuring—the cost is so high. They grow accustomed to looking for God in the drama of the thunder and the whirlwind, and the Lord slips by in the whisper of the breeze.

The same with Jesus. The same Jesus who lashes the religious pillars of the people as hypocrites and whitened sepulchers and calls his first vicar, Peter, a “Satan” looks out over his people with love and declares that he will not break a bruised reed, he will not snuff out the wick which still smolders. He encourages his followers when they break the letter of the law. He himself heals on the Sabbath and, when challenged, blithely poses the question as to which is more important: to heal or to adhere to a code. And then he allows the grim process of collusion between religious and civil authorities to take him to his own death because he has found there his Father’s will.

These brief reflections on God and the revelation of God in Jesus of Nazareth tell us something profound about renewal. They put us in touch with themes like continual conversion and pilgrimage; with the image of the potter fashioning a clay vessel and then smashing it so that an even more pleasing one can be created. They show us a God conversing with Moses face-to-face and a God who instructs Moses to extend his wisdom by calling to himself 70 counselors to help him hear the voice of the Lord. They show us a God who is present to the people in a tent of meeting; in a holy ark; in a magnificent temple; in the womb of a lowly maiden; in the body of her son, whose death causes the veil of the temple to be split in two; and finally in the body of the church and indeed in the body of the whole cosmos. They show us a God who can accept the tightest constraints to be with the people—and a God who will smash every one of the vessels we are tempted to turn into an idol in an attempt to keep this jealous one from asking more of us.

Renewal is not a program or a set of practices, much less a bandwagon to climb on or a weapon with

which to flail the “unrenewed.” It is the action of the Lord weaning us away from the iPod security dolls to which we cling. It is demanding and stretching and uncompromising. And to the extent that we can allow it to transform us, it is the letting go in which we experience the faithfulness of our God.

“WHERE” IS RENEWAL?

Different people will locate this process of renewal in different places. Each has its own validity—and each is incomplete by itself. Let me name five different arenas in which continued conversion is asked of us by our God.

1. Personal Conversion For some people renewal is focused on the individual person and his or her “interior” life. It concerns itself with things like personal prayer, scripture study and spiritual reading; with the acquisition of virtues and the overcoming of vices; with penance and asceticism. It means examining our attitudes toward a world which seems bent on destroying itself in the pursuit of wealth and pleasure and irresponsibility.

This is an important focus, of course. It is one we must return to again and again. But for some people it becomes the whole meaning of the “spiritual” life. And renewal calls for more.

2. Conversion to a Primary Community The God who calls us to conversion is a communion of persons. And so the transformation to which we are called cannot be simply one of interior attitude and personal piety. We are called to learn what our God is all about and become reflectors of our God’s life through interpersonal relationships. This is the sphere of our primary communities: of marriage and family, of friendship and lasting commitments. Renewal here involves learning what it means to be faithful, what it means to pledge ourselves to someone and to fulfill that pledge even in the face of breakdown or betrayal.

Our society is searching desperately to understand this level of commitment. We are deluged with calls to learn how to communicate, to unlock the power of our feelings and learn to trust. We try to learn the arts and skills of parenting so that our children will grow up with the self-esteem and the empathy needed to make lasting commitments. We use the best resources among married couples to prepare the next generation for the responsibilities of marriage, and the Spirit raises up all

ports of self-help groups whereby we can learn to support one another through the pain and tragedy of human interpersonal breakdowns. These are all forms of renewal, of experiencing ourselves as wounded pilgrims. But once again the immediate interpersonal world of our primary community is not the whole arena of the Lord's call.

3. Conversion to Neighborhood and Parish We, like the Jesus who models life for us, are called forth by a God who invites us beyond the comfort and security of our homes. We must never forget that the same Jesus who proclaimed the sanctity of marriage and our responsibility to revere and honor our parents also denounced our tendency to domesticate the call of God and reduce it to some sort of tribal loyalty. He challenged the institution of the biological family as no religious teacher ever did when he said we must be ready to leave father and mother and spouse and home and all things to become his disciples. There is a neighbor beyond our front door, a neighbor indwelt by God, and that fact shatters all our claims to privatize our faith.

We meet our neighbor first in those who are close enough for us to feed and clothe, close enough for us to dry their tears, close enough to visit in their loneliness. They are the people of our immediate church community or neighborhood—beyond our homes but distinct persons with faces we recognize and names we can remember. When a parish develops a food bank for emergency assistance to those in need, that is renewal. When people band together to take the Eucharist to shut-ins or to welcome new arrivals to a neighborhood parish community, that is renewal. Each time students in a campus ministry group offer to drive their fellow students home from a party when they have drunk too much, that is renewal. When a parish community adopts a refugee family with a very different ethnic or cultural background, that is renewal.

But neighborhoods can become ghettos and parishes parochial. The call of renewal will not allow us to stop there; our God invites us further.

4. Conversion to the Local Church The Second Vatican Council and the Roman Synods which followed have alerted us to another dimension of ongoing conversion. They have reminded us that our union with the universal church is through the medium of our union within a local church gathered around its bish-

op. Our Catholic church is a communion of local churches. The mystery of God's self-revelation takes place, not through some worldwide uniformity, but through the richness and diversity of different human localities and cultures. Together we must wrestle with what it means to be one church in, say, Southern Ohio. That means transcending the parochialism of St. Hildegard's while daring to be different from the church at Baltimore or San Salvador or even as close as Youngstown.

When we call parish communities to look beyond themselves to the needs and issues of the broader church of the area, we are challenging potential idols and engaging in renewal. When we make a parochial revolving fund a more responsible vehicle for assisting parishes in need; when some parishes risk their own security to join in a cooperative effort to address the needs of the whole area; when central funding enables a diocese to supply roving ministers to small rural communities or the personnel pool enables it to provide religious ministry to those in prison; when hundreds and thousands are welcomed to full communion with our church through the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults; and when potential lay ministers are formed in basic ministerial spirituality through a Lay Pastoral Ministry Program—all of that is renewal. So is the effort to work together with the other Catholic dioceses of a state to promote legislation that will alleviate injustice done to the weak and underprivileged in the state. And so is the effort to mend the unholy divisions in the body of Christ, when a diocesan church enters into covenants of mutual support with other Christian churches. Each time we reach out beyond our own little enclaves and allow our identities to be challenged by the Lord who addresses us through the needs and dreams of others, we are opened up a little more into the fullness of God's call to us and plan for our world.

And still we are not at the end of the call to renewal. We have yet to take our faith beyond the walls of the church, which is the most demanding call of all.

5. Conversion to the World The God who calls us to discipleship is not confined to the affairs of the institutional church. The full meaning of the incarnation is that the whole of creation becomes the abode of the Holy One. Once Jesus passes through death to his risen life the old separations between Jew and Gentile, slave and free, male and female, sacred and profane are abolished. By the time St. Paul writes to the Christians

of Ephesus and Corinth his initial grasp of the mystery of Jesus of Nazareth has been broken open and he has been led to the vision of the Christ whose body is the whole cosmos, whose spirit permeates all human activity whether it is designated as Christian or not. Pope Pius XI tried to make us aware of that fact when he instituted the feast of Christ the King in 1925: all human societies and their social structures and institutions are places wherein the dominion of the Lord's justice and peace are to be established. The magnificent vision of Vatican II reaches its full expression only when the church is situated squarely in the midst of the modern world.

Our renewal is incomplete as long as we see any facet of this world and its history as foreign to or removed from the call of our God and the redeeming mission of Jesus. Renewal happens when medical personnel struggle with the complex possibilities of technological intervention or with the responsibility to make competent health care accessible to all. It happens when business people question whether they can simply abandon cities which have become dependent on them, just because they can make a higher profit elsewhere; or when citizens call for greater accountability of corporations for the products they market or the toxic by-products they leave behind. It happens when the faithful realize that their job is not a secular event but the place where they are responsible for the good of human society and the resources of our earth. It happens when citizens call their government to accountability for policies which grind the poor and keep people on welfare, for economic structures which keep underdeveloped peoples in bondage to the excesses of the first world, for agricultural measures which allow thousands and hundreds of thousands to starve while we stockpile tons of food and keep acres and acres out of cultivation. It happens when we as a people examine our responsibility to the displaced of our world who seek only a modicum of the freedom and blessings which we enjoy only because we have received them from the Lord.

We are citizens of the whole world because we belong to the God who is Lord of the whole world. Political action is not only our natural birthright as human beings, it is our spiritual responsibility as followers of an engaged and incarnate redeemer. Whether the particular issue be the violence of pornography or the violence of sexual discrimination or the violence of a nuclear arms race, our God stretches us to take our

stand and be responsible for this creation. That is the extent to which the demand for renewal reaches. Our God says in the book of Revelation: "Behold: I am making *all things new*" and only when our vision embraces the whole and our action reflects our vision will Christ be complete. Till then we must be broken open and converted and renewed.

THE CALL TO SUPPORT EACH OTHER

These then are the five conversions, the five levels of renewal involved in becoming genuine Christian pilgrims. For each of us one of these conversions will probably be less costly than the other four. We will be comforted by the God we meet in the St. Vincent de Paul Society and terrified of the God we meet in the silence of personal prayer; thrilled by the challenging God of political protest while crucified by the God who calls for fidelity to the demands of everyday commitments to flawed human beings.

That means that for each of us the work of renewal, of ongoing conversion and pilgrimage, will be different. No one has a corner on renewal. It will be different even for the same person at different periods of life, for our God is a God of history. That is why we cannot work at renewal alone: it is too easy to settle for the God who leaves us only comfortable—or the God whose demands are so far removed from where we stand that we can easily dismiss them as Utopian. We need each other to discern the arena of our next conversion: individuals need other individuals; families and other communities need the call of the world "out there"; parish communities need the call of the local church; the local church needs the challenge of other local churches; the whole church needs the God who calls to it from "outside the walls." And all need the vision of the solitary contemplative.



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HUMAN DEVELOPMENT, MORALITY AND THE CHRISTIAN LIFE

George Dennis O'Brien, Ph.D.



*La morale a été inventée par les malingres.
et la vie chrétienne inventée par Jésus Christ.*

—Charles Peguy

In this essay I want to discuss the relation between morality and human development—with special focus on morality and Christian life. That may seem to be a pointless if not perverse task. Inculcating morality may appear to be the essential task of developmental theory and practice. Individuals who fail to acquire morality are hunted in any reasonable quest for human fulfillment. Lacking personal virtues like courage and temperance which direct fear, anger, pleasure and pain, individuals are diverted from any goal-directed activity by the passion of the moment. Lacking the social virtue of justice, individuals will be shunned as criminals or sociopaths. As for Christianity, the Catholic Church presents itself as an infallible moral tutor.

All well and good, but reflection can sometimes present an opposite case. If there are those crippled by no morality, there are people crippled by “too much morality.” I do not mean crippled by perverse moral laws but by what is regarded as the “right” morality.

Literature and life offer clear examples of persons crippled by stringent moral codes even and especially the right morality. Someone may be a pillar of moral righteousness to himself and society but pay the price of inner psychic suffering and the failure of intimate relations. Freud’s neurotic patients did not suffer from amorality but from excessive moral guilt. The problem of “too much morality” is a special concern for Christian ethics which enjoins “Be perfect as your heavenly Father is perfect.” In treating a person of stringent morality one might well judge that the last thing the patient needs is a demand for perfection. For Freud, the perfectionist demand of religious morality was, if not the primary cause of mental illness, at least a co-conspirator in creating psychic cripples.

Christians cannot avoid the issue of perfectionism. John Paul II’s encyclical, *Veritatis Splendor*, is a clarion call for moral perfection. There are repeated comments about holding to the objective moral law even to the point of martyrdom. The Pope is realistic enough about our ordinary moral capacity. On our own we are bound to moral failure, but for God “all things are possible.” To attain perfection we need the grace which can be attained

only by following Jesus Christ. I accept the Christian demand for perfection, but I believe that John Paul misleads by linking Christian perfection so closely with moral perfection. Grace is the essential condition of Christian perfection, but it is not clear how grace relates to morality. If the focus of Christian life is on morality, grace can appear to be an ethical push. Grace is a sort of tail wind for our ethical airplane. The proper metaphor for grace is more like hang-gliding: without the wind you don't move at all, you fall to earth. This distinction between morality and Christian life is what Peguy is suggesting in the provocative statement at the head of this article. "Morality was invented by malingerers. Christianity was invented by Jesus Christ." I want to argue Peguy's case.

In an attempt to throw light on morality and its place in human development and Christian life, I will examine three prominent moral philosophies: Kantian "deontological" ethics, utilitarianism, and natural law ethics. Each of these theories is highly sophisticated, and I will offer only the merest sketch of each. Nevertheless, I think that I can highlight significant strengths and limitations. I have attempted to sum up each theory by suggesting the type of person who might serve as an exemplar of the specific ethical philosophy. The three exemplars are respectively: Kantian moral hero, utilitarian statesman, and natural law craftsman. Finally I will discuss a model which, I would contend, transcends ordinary moral categories: the saint.

KANTIANISM: THE MORAL HERO

The strength of Kantian ethics is its concentration on moral duty. Morality is revealed in the demands of duty over desire. Genuine moral actions are those in which an individual transcends subjective self-interest, acting solely under the universal commands of the moral law. Much of our conduct may be in conformity with moral law but lack genuine moral status because it stems from self interest. Simply overcoming self interest does not, of course, constitute morality; the law which I obey must be a moral law not some political law which may in fact direct me toward immoral conduct. How do I recognize moral duties? Given a putative action, I consider whether it could become a law for all rational beings. In another formulation, Kant says the moral law demands that we treat rational beings as ends not as means.

Kantian morality is as challenging as it is edifying, but there is something missing in his construal of the "objectivity" of morality. Kant developed his moral theo-

ry in the second of his three great Critiques, *The Critique of Practical Reason*. The first, *The Critique of Pure Reason*, focused on the philosophical assumptions which make objective, universal laws of natural science possible. When Kant turns to morality, he borrows from objective scientific law by suggesting that the test of a moral action is whether the action could be willed as a universal law of nature. There is, however, a serious question about whether "objectivity" in science fits "objectivity" in morality. Science seeks to formulate generalities that can be applied without remainder to individual particulars. Biology is concerned with the general type; experiments on this frog are presumed to apply to all frogs. There is no universal objective law for all frogs. If there is objectivity on the side of the scientific law, there is objectivity on the side of the investigator. The scientist is charged to adopt an objective, "scientific" stance so that objective knowledge can be discovered. The scientist transcends particularity of gender, political views, age and so on. The scientist qua scientist is thus no more a particular than the frog that is examined.

There seems to be a similarity between "objectivity" in scientific law and in morality. In morals we are asked to subsume our particular "subjective" self under a universal moral law. Just as there is no female or male physics, so there would presumably be no male or female morality. The moral law abstracts from subjectivity in order to treat all rational beings the same. Rational beings, the sorts of entities we regard as "persons," have essential moral status in contrast say to animals or trees which we do in certain legitimate ways treat as means to some end, for food or furniture.

It is true that morality applies essentially to persons; it would be clearly immoral to regard, say, women or slaves as non-persons—though this has certainly been done. Having said that, however, there is something lacking in a Morality-of-Persons. Actual human beings are not abstract persons; they are highly particular persons: male persons, female persons, young, old, sick, intelligent persons and so on. The philosopher Robert Paul Wolff noted how uninformative it would be to say "There are persons in the next room." It may seem like high morality to insist that we treat everyone as a person if all one is interested in is not treating them as a non-person, but once that matter is established, moral duty seems to focus on the type of person and his or her condition or circumstance. If there is something missing in locating the object of ethical concern in abstract persons, there is also something lack-

ing if the stance if the moral actor is charged to abstract himself or herself from particularity. In the real world, act as father to my daughter, not as one abstract person to another abstract person. Scientists may exist transcendentally beyond particularities; moral subjects and moral actors are historically concrete particulars.

The Kantian philosophy of moral duty concentrates on one important moral story: the moment of self sacrifice, when desire—even the base of all desire, desire—is demanded by duty. In the pedagogy of human development we do hold up moments of heroism as exemplars of morality. The problem is in how one interprets the self in moral action. Moral duty should not be measured by self sacrifice: i.e., the more irksome the task, the more moral it must be. Concentrating on moral heroism in developmental pedagogy would be counter-productive. There is an impossible perfectionism to Kantian duty. Kant freely admits that we can never be certain in any moral action that “the dear self” has not entered in and thus corrupted the moral act. Positing true morality as pure duty while it leads to the model of the moral hero can also lead to a paralyzing scrupulosity when the individual inevitably fails to rise to such noble heights. The Kantian moral model can be as psychically damaging as Christian perfectionism is presumed to be.

UTILITARIANISM: THE MORAL STATESMAN

The power and limitation of Kantian duty can be seen by considering its principal rival in contemporary academic philosophy: utilitarianism. In sharp contrast to Kant’s demand for a universal law which transcends our desires, utility theory tests morality by a calculation of desires. In Jeremy Bentham’s original version, individual acts were judged according to whatever gives the most direct sensuous pleasure and the least pain. Bentham’s theory, because it rests on subjective feeling, seemed to critics and later utilitarians hardly a moral theory at all. It sounds like every person to his own morality. Extended utilitarian theories enjoin acting for the greatest good for the greatest number. Not my good alone but the general good. Rule utilitarianism enjoins not just the good of individuals but the good obtained by upholding institutions. Rule utilitarianism attempts to capture a sense of duty over desire: why we uphold a law even when it leads to manifestly undesirable results in the short run.

The model moral actor for utilitarianism is the statesman. In fact, the impetus behind Bentham’s util-

The Kantian moral model can be as psychically damaging as Christian perfectionism is presumed to be.

ity theory was the absurdity of anti-poaching laws in England. Starving peasants were denied access to ready food so that landed gentry could protect the objects of their hunting pastime. A wise statesman, having calculated the general good, would have changed the law. Because utilitarian calculation seems the essence of sound politics and prudent ethical decision, utility theory appears to be the correct moral decision procedure.

The strength of utility theory is that it brings ethical matters down from transcendent law to a consideration of complex and concrete human desires. The limitation of utility theory is that the good to be realized is a non-moral good: pleasure, extended happiness, or the stability of institutions. Reason does not locate moral ends as in Kantian duty; reason locates means to non-moral ends. Because utility theory finally rests on non-moral goods, it ultimately fails the aspect of morality which Kantianism emphasizes: the fact that a certain action constitutes my duty regardless of my desires or even the general good of individuals and the institutions of an ordered society. Henry Sidgwick, one of the most astute defenders of utility theory, admitted that at the moment of decision there is no reason why an individual could not choose to maximize his own happiness at the cost of another, the many, or the institutions of society. Defenders of utility theory often posit natural benevolence as a check on Sidgwick’s dilemma. But benevolence is a moral duty, not a fortunate genetic inheritance. Misanthropic misers do not escape censure by passing conduct off to their DNA.

The most serious problem with utilitarianism as a moral decision procedure is that its goal is impossible to attain. If I am enjoined to take that course of action which leads to the greatest good for the greatest number, I face an impossible task. An action can have infinite consequences as in the old nursery rhyme about the loss of the nail that led to the fall of the kingdom. The moral statesman is a worthy ideal, but in reality

the practical politician arbitrarily limits the scope of his calculations. A truly scrupulous statesman charged to maximize the good of all could well throw up his hands and retire from public life. The utilitarian model for human development or therapy thus runs serious risks. On the one hand those who take utility as a moral model may retreat to subjective, personal "happiness"—lacking, unfortunately, the natural endowment of benevolence—in which case there is no point to moral development. The same result occurs if the person realizes that the greatest good for the greatest number demands an impossible calculation and so retreats again to personal desire, wish or whim.

NATURAL LAW: THE MORAL CRAFTSMAN

Contrasting Kantian duty and utilitarian calculation presents a dilemma for moral philosophy: Kantianism is too high, utility too low (or too high) to match our moral intuitions. Given the dilemma presented by the two dominant secular academic theories, I want to consider the tradition of natural law morality which has been so prominent in Catholic moral thought. The interpretation of natural law which I will offer is, I believe, the dominant interpretation derived from Aristotle and recast in Christian terms by Thomas Aquinas. My account follows the extraordinarily careful interpretation in Jean Porter, *Nature and Reason: A Thomistic Theory of Natural Law*. (Porter's influence is also present in the analysis of Kantian and utilitarian moralities offered above.)

Unlike Kantian morality, which projects reason overcoming desire, natural law has a positive relation to natural human desires. For natural law theories the ethical is desire fulfilled by reason, not desire transcended by reason. Desire is ethically fulfilled when accomplished rationally, but the aim of rationality in morality is rooted in human desires. Ethical education aims, as Aristotle puts it, at the development of rational desire. The flourishing of human desire is conventionally denominated as "happiness."

As stated thus far, natural law ethics sounds like utility theory in which reason is a means for fulfilling desires. Where it differs from utility is that the end projected, happiness, contains morality as an ingredient. Biological ends are fulfilled by rational desires which become habits of action, the "virtues." It is these habits which are the proper focus of moral praise. Desires fulfilled by vice—or accident—lack a sense of rational fulfillment and therefore fail to fulfill human nature as rational. Because virtue is an ingredient in human happiness, natural law theory can

account for the notion of duty. Virtuous (rational) desire shape and check raw desires. Virtue may even lead me to sacrifice my life lest I lead an unworthy life of cowardice. The centrality of virtue in this discussion of natural law needs to be differentiated from a simpler version of natural law which focuses on acts, not on virtues. It is not the act as such but the virtue or vice which informs or fails to inform the act that is the focus of morality.

Natural law ethics, then, is founded in the biological life of a rational creature as shaped into the virtues. However, as Jean Porter puts it, natural law underdetermines specific moral actions, structures, and codes. There is a broad agreement across all human cultures about the universal value of the virtue of courage. There may be great disagreement, however, as to what counts as courage. Porter cites a commentator's comparison of Aquinas and the classic Chinese philosopher Mencius on courage. Their agreement on courage as a virtue is broad but shallow; their differences about the specifics of courage tend to be narrow and deep.

From the perspective of natural law there may be many differing laws and paradigms which can make a claim to instantiate the "natural." A particular code may deviate so far from natural human fulfillment either in direct biological need or moral ingredient that there will be strong natural law arguments to adjust the social code. On the other hand, there may be striking differences where it would be difficult if not impossible to choose a specific code on the basis of natural law. Porter cites the conflict between traditional Nigerian punishments for killing and those of the British imperialists who entered the culture in the late nineteenth century. Both cultures agreed that certain types of killing were immoral and should be punished. The Nigerian sanction was restitution, the British sanction was retribution. From the Nigerian side it seemed irrational ("unnatural"?) to execute or jail someone for unjustified killing when you could compel the perpetrator to make economic restitution.

I have characterized the moral actor under natural law theory as the moral craftsman. Ethics in this theory is a species of human skill or craft, a learned habit which allows the person to accomplish certain actions. There are artistic habits for being a good pianist and ethical habits for acting courageously. Habit is a persisting ability to perform in a certain manner. Being able to play one sonata does not make me a pianist; dashing to the rescue may be a surcharged moment that does not prove steadfast courage. Habits produce exemplars of the craft which, in turn, are the tests w

ce to assess the presence of the craft. We know excellence in piano playing because we know how Schnabel plays Beethoven; we recognize courage in Hector's defense of Troy. Crafts and ethical habits are not static; refinements of technique with new standards of excellence may emerge. Ethical culture is a work in progress. Because ethical cultures are works in progress, they are endangered if the ethical "craft" tradition is frozen or is challenged by richer and more sophisticated skills from within or without. We derive new and better exemplars of courage or justice and then seek to shape our habits to produce a more nuanced courage, a more extensive sense of justice.

Natural law theory as here discussed seems to present the appropriate model for morality in human development. Natural law ethics is, to a point, itself a theory of human development. Unlike Kantian ethics in which one must continually rise above the "dear self," natural law ethics is rooted in developing the virtuous self as the key to fulfilling rational desires. Unlike utility theory, which either fails to account for morality at all or forces the moral actor with an impossible calculation, natural law seems eminently practical. We can and do educate children into virtuous habits. In so doing we have exemplars of virtue at hand as pedagogical guides. Kantianism and utilitarianism seem to lead to impossible ethical demands; natural law theory does not pose an impossible task except that any specific ethical code will be open and unfinished. Exemplars are only exemplars; so there is an openness to ethical tradition. Natural law ethics is open to enrichment, improvement and, when it comes to specific interpretative moral codes, fundamental critique. The final virtue in natural law ethics is prudence or practical wisdom, the careful assessment of culture and circumstance which refines the specifics of the ethical decision. Grounding human development in natural law is developmental both in the crafting of the virtues and in the open assessment of specifics which can lead to enriched moral practice.

THEOLOGICAL MORALITY: THE SAINT

The analysis of natural law presented here would seem to run contrary to the usual Catholic view of morality in general and natural law ethics in particular. Catholic moral teaching is claimed to be infallible and specific. The Church claims that there is an ethical code which goes beyond the underdetermined character of natural law. (I must note that for many Catholic ethicists

natural law itself is specific in a manner that the account in this essay rejects.) The root of this belief in a specific and absolute Christian moral code lies in an aspect of medieval ethical discussion so far avoided. The medieval scholastics were ultimately concerned with theological morality which was more than "mere" natural law ethics. If natural law is underdetermined, Biblical codes and commands could be regarded as supplying the specifics. While there is much to applaud in the scholastics' basic view of natural law, using Biblical codes to determine the underdetermined would be seriously questioned by modern Biblical theology.

The general trend of modern Biblical theology insists that there is as much ancient Hebrew culture as there is divine command in the Biblical codes. This does not mean that the culture displayed in Biblical law, ritual and story is to be dismissed as outmoded. Much of Biblical culture may be a plausible and even compelling instantiation of natural law. But whenever it comes to specific codes, we need assessment, not simple acceptance. If one understands that the Bible is a complex cultural document reflecting views shaped, changed and colored over at least a thousand years—not to mention two millennia of subsequent commentary—one needs to find a different sense of "holiness" in the Holy Book than as a compendium of direct divine commands. That sense can be discovered by going to the most fundamental Biblical belief—and the first claim of the Christian Creed—belief in a Creator God.

It was important to Aquinas that God was the Creator of nature. Many natural law theorists are quite content to rest ethics upon palpable human biological needs and rationality. God is unnecessary. For Christians, however, there are strong reasons for introducing the Biblical Creator into ethics. Because the Creator is the ultimate principle of goodness, we are assured that the created world, in all its booming, buzzing confusion, is in some fundamental fashion "good"—including human biology. Which is, of course, just what the Biblical Creator declares after each of the six days of creative handiwork. But does the Divine Seal of Approval for Nature add anything to ethics as such? What the Biblical Creator does is indicate the place of morality in human life and where human life also has a dimension beyond ethics in the "religious." Introducing the Biblical Creator introduces the last of my suggested "moral actors": the saint—except that the saint is not exactly an "actor" and inhabits a realm "beyond morality."

In order to get a fix on the idea of saintliness, one must start with the proper notion of "creator." In Plato, the world is created not by an ultimate God but by a "demiurge" who, having looked at the Idea of the Good, does the best he can to instantiate the Good in recalcitrant matter. Something like the Platonic structure is the background assumption for such compelling moral philosophies as Stoicism and, in a fashion, Kantianism. Stoicism offers a particularly clear case for the difference the Biblical Creator makes in human life. For the Stoics the good life transcends bodily needs which are ultimately irrelevant to the moral goal: rational contemplation of the order of the universe. The great ancient Stoics, the emperor Marcus Aurelius and the slave Epictetus, considered their social position inconsequential. Through rational contemplation one should transcend society and the exigencies of the body. A principal paradox of Stoicism was that a man could be happy even on the rack because morality (rational contemplation) is its own reward.

Christian ethics has often been interpreted in the Stoic manner. Christians are enjoined to ignore the lures of body and world in order to attend to the immortal soul. Christian martyrdom has been given a Stoic interpretation: with faith one can be "happy" even under the sword of persecution. Or, martyrdom is a species of Kantian moral heroism. The Stoic and Kantian view are, however, inconsistent with belief in the Biblical Creator of Christianity. Christians pray for "the resurrection of the body;" for the Stoics the body is inconsequential, a distraction to the real nature of humanity which is the rational soul. To the Stoic death under persecution is a non-event, no cause for real suffering; for the Christian the death of Jesus on the Cross is a terrible event of real suffering.

Resurrection of the body may be the last petition in the Christian Creed, but it is based on the first claim: there is a God who created heaven and earth—bodies included. God does not create an inconsequential illusion. What is the "moral" of Biblical Creation? There is no moral. Unlike Platonic-Stoic views where goodness is an idea above in terms of which God acts, in the Biblical view God himself is the Good. Creation as creation is "good" not because there is some standard outside God from which we can judge whether God did a proper job. Creation is good simply because God brought it into being and, in the New Testament, we read "God so loved the world that he sent his only begotten son" to live a worldly life. Unlike some recent

legal cases in which children have sued their parents for "wrongful birth," Christians accept birth, creation as good in itself. Just being is good. This is the sensibility of the saint. In ethics we are interested in habit of acting. Using Flannery O'Connor's phrase, the saint has "the habit of being." "The world is charged with the grandeur of God"—and that is enough. Of course there is a Christian moral duty to improve the human condition, but before and beyond moral and social improvement the Creator invites us to love the sheer being of things. Sidney Carter captures this sense of living beyond moral uplift or social progress in a poem on Mother Theresa. "No revolution will come in time to alter this man's life/ except the one surprise of being loved/...wash the feet/ that will not walk tomorrow/...your love is dangerous, your levity/ would contradict/ our local gravity."

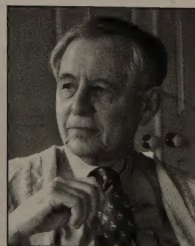
There is much more that needs to be said about "the habit of being." Let me close, however, with one way in which a habit of being may enter into practitioners of human development—particularly therapists. The psychotherapist or counselor begins her task by taking the patient "where he's at!" There is a habit of forgiveness, accepting the individual beyond the client's self-destructive or immoral behavior. Such "forgiveness" is a habit of being which values the person deeply and fully as something more than a moral actor. Jacques Lacan was correct when he suggested that therapists practice saintliness.

RECOMMENDED READING

John Paul II, *Veritatis Splendor*, released on August 6, 1983. English translation: *Origins*, October 14, 1993.

O'Brien, G. D. *Finding the Voice of the Church*. Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2007.

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